SECRETS OF THE VATICAN

ALL ABOUT HISTORY

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Poland's heroic stand against Hitler

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How his crazed quest for gold and glory turned into the cruel slaughter of a civilisation

LAST QUEEN OF HAWAII

From paradise kingdom to American colony

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Cortés led his Spanish conquistadors against the Aztec Empire at the Battle of Otumba in 1520

Welcome

As I write this introduction we are just a short distance away from the end of the year, which inclines me to reflect on the last 12 months. Then again, have we had enough of that for now? There is something to be said for gaining some distance before making judgements about a period of time. That's why we continue to study and write about history. Sometimes our distance from an event, while removing us from the fine details, might offer us new insight through a different lens.

There's been a lot of discussion on the outer edges of the history debate about rewriting history this year. In these pages I hope we've shown how new perspectives and revealing lost stories can offer us revelatory new understandings of the past. Just because an event wasn't heavily discussed before, doesn't make it any less true or impactful than those events that've had volumes penned about them.

There is always so much more to learn about the past and through that exploration, I like to think, we learn something about ourselves.

Many of us have had some extra time or incentive to reflect on our lives and the world around us this year and I hope we've given you an outlet and sometimes some relief from everything that's been going on. We'll continue to strive for that in 2021. I hope you enjoy this issue and look forward to our 100th issue, on sale 28 January.

Jonathan Gordon
Editor

ALL ABOUT HISTORY

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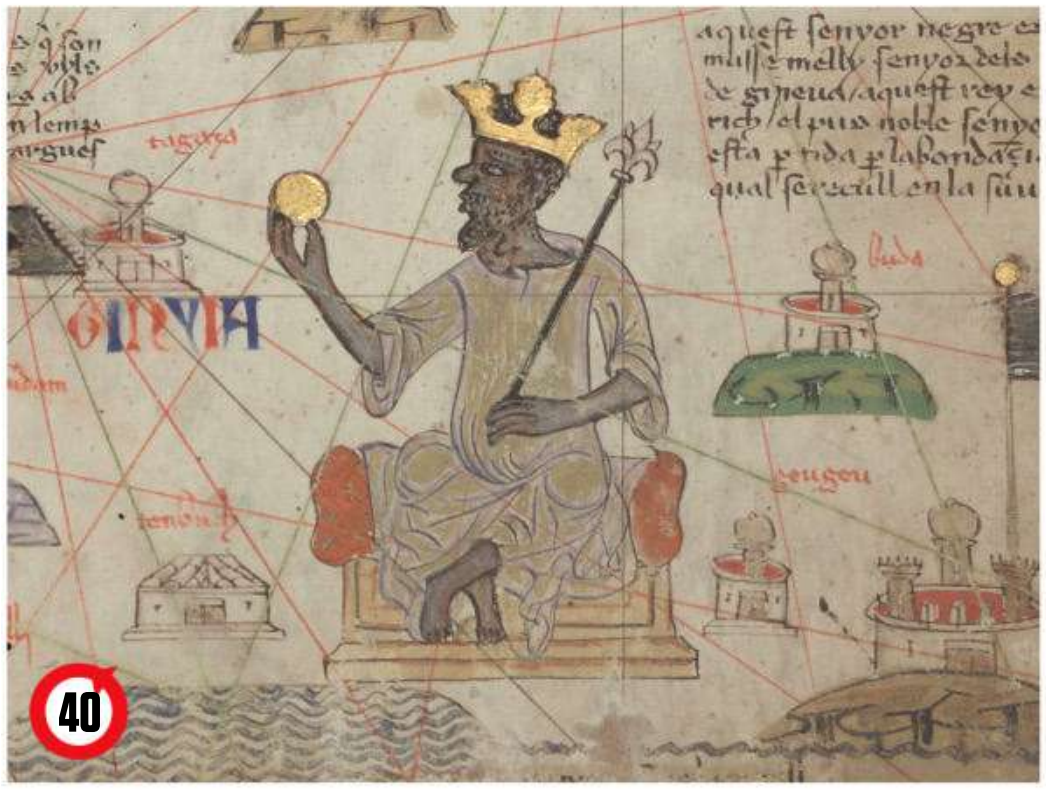

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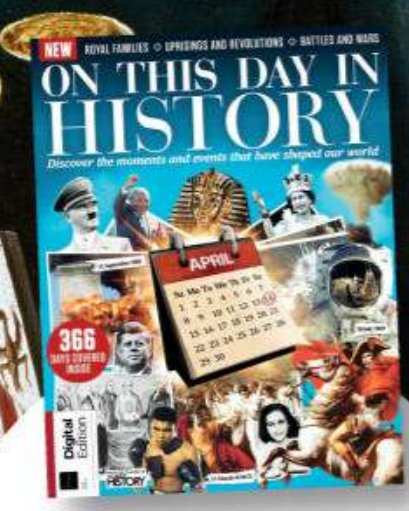
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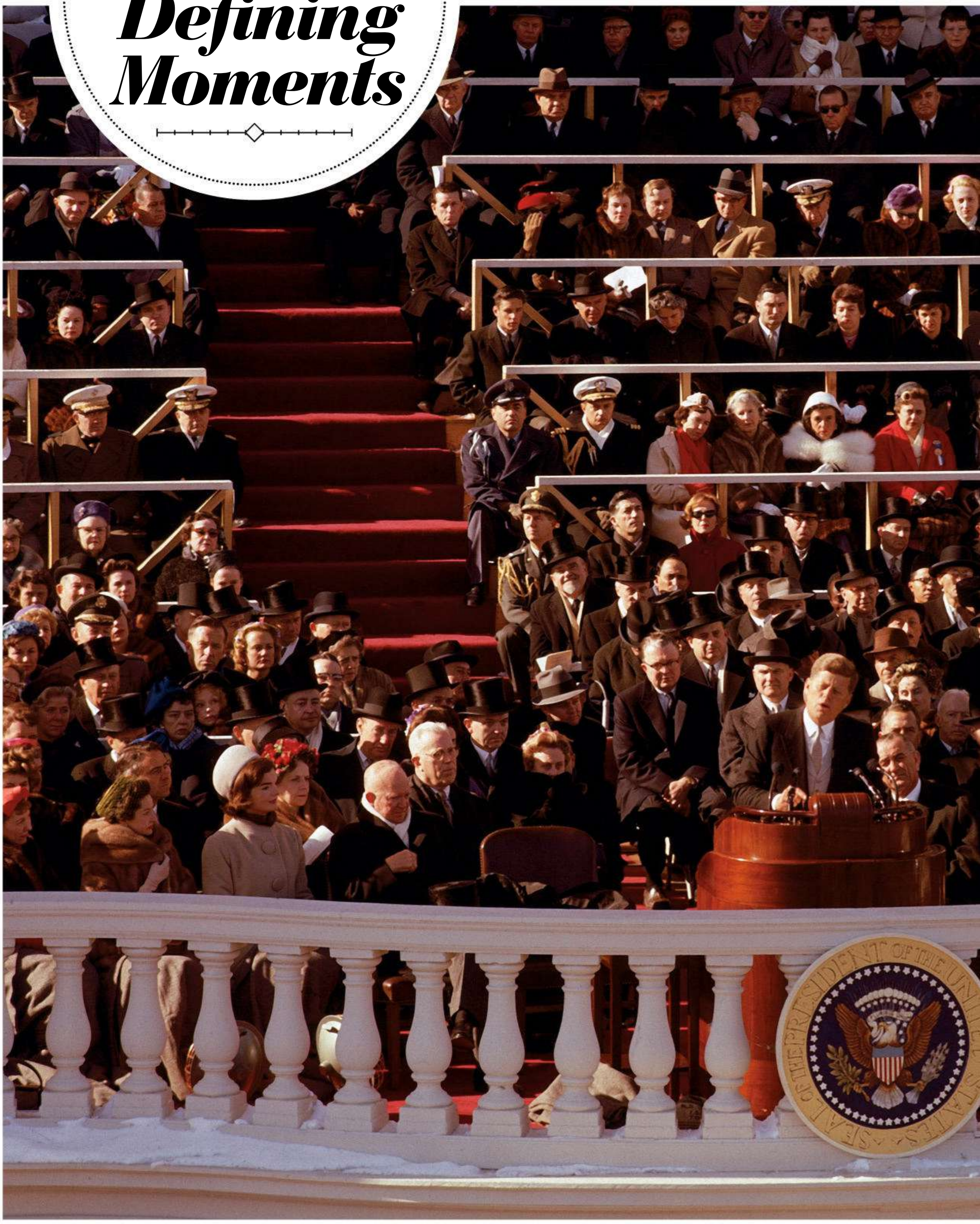
Defining Moments



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20 January 1961

THE INAUGURATION OF PRESIDENT JOHN F KENNEDY

In one of the closest elections in the history of the United States, John Fitzgerald Kennedy was elected president in November 1960. The popular vote margin nationwide had been only 118,550 out of 69 million ballots cast. So, when newly sworn in President Kennedy took to the podium for his inauguration, he spoke of unity and a common purpose for Americans. And, of course, he spoke the famous words, "Ask not what your country can do for you – ask what you can do for your country."

© Getty Images

7 January 1928

THE RIVER THAMES FLOODS LONDON

The River Thames burst its banks following a period of heavy snow and rain, coupled with a high tide and a storm surge. Numerous areas flooded, including Southwark, Westminster and Putney, with some streets left under 4ft of water. The disaster caused extensive damage, leaving 14 people dead and thousands homeless across London.

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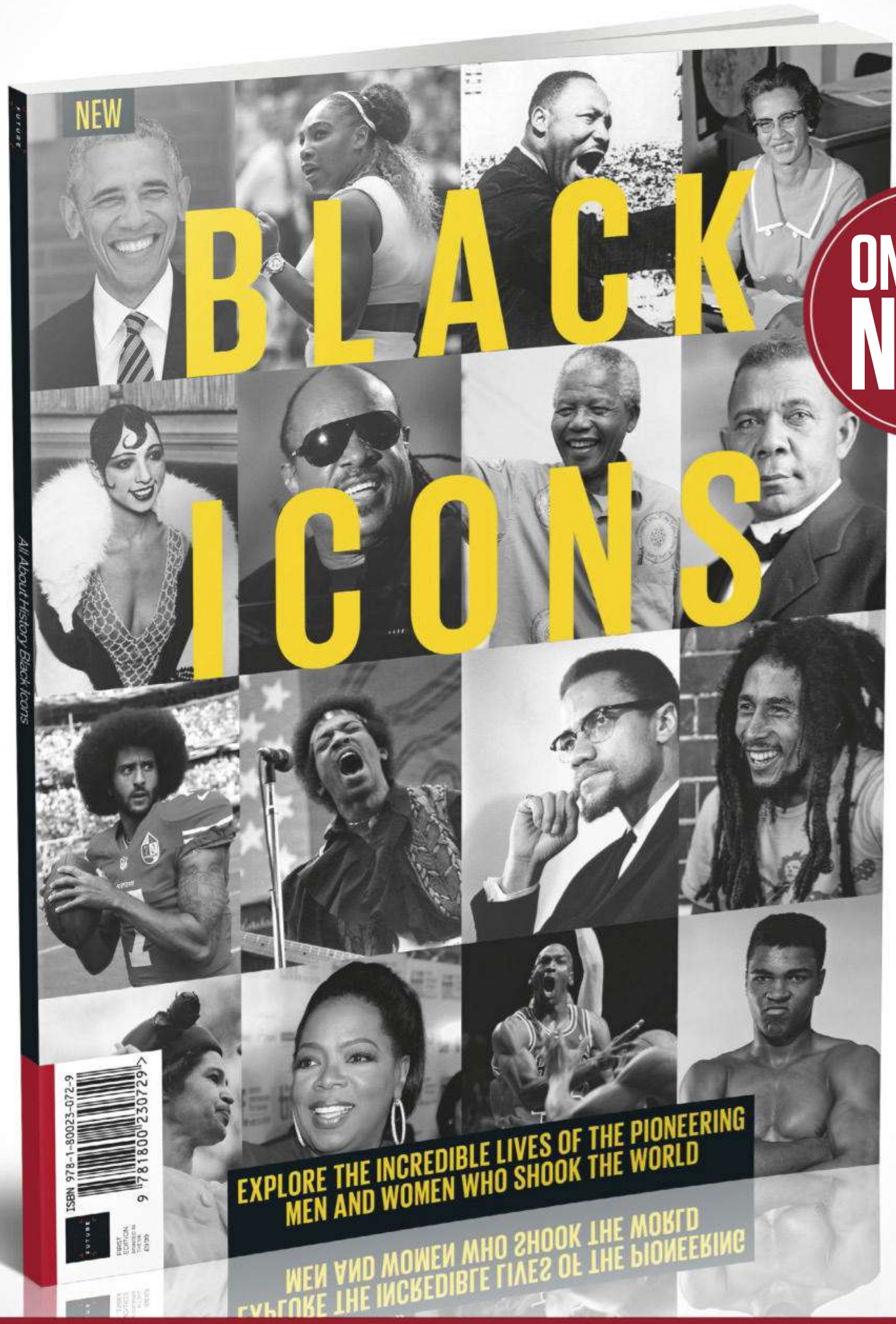
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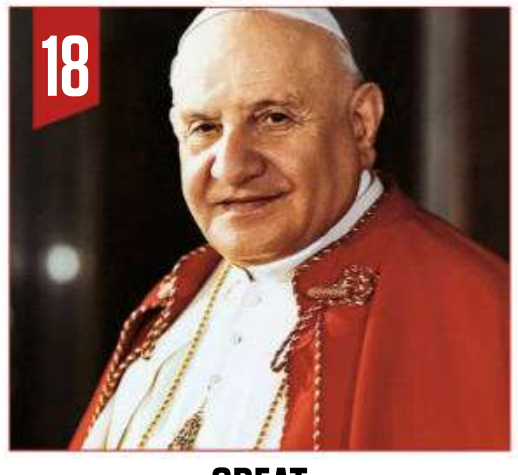
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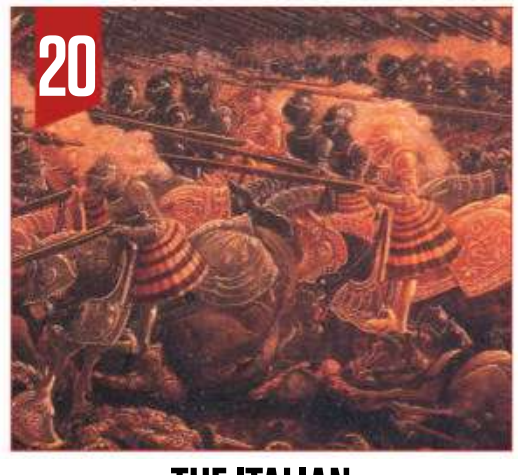
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THE ITALIAN WARS

Main image source: © Getty Images

Written by Jessica Leggett, Jonathan Gordon, David Crookes, Hareth Al Bustani, Katharine Marsh

Key Events

Image source: wiki/Web Gallery of Art

As well as his negotiations with Pope Leo I, Attila the Hun is said to have withdrawn after a ghostly vision said he would die

ATTILA TURNS BACK 452 CE

Attila the Hun, who leads a tribal empire in Central and Eastern Europe, seeks to invade and ravage famine-plagued Italy. Pope Leo I meets him and, following peaceful negotiations, persuades Attila to retreat to Hungary, cementing the influence of the papacy.

THE TRIAL OF FORMOSUS 896

Pope Formosus dies but nine months later his corpse is exhumed. It is then sat upon a throne in full papal regalia and posthumously tried by his political enemies. After the pope's ordinations are deemed invalid, three fingers are cut off and the corpse is thrown into the Tiber.

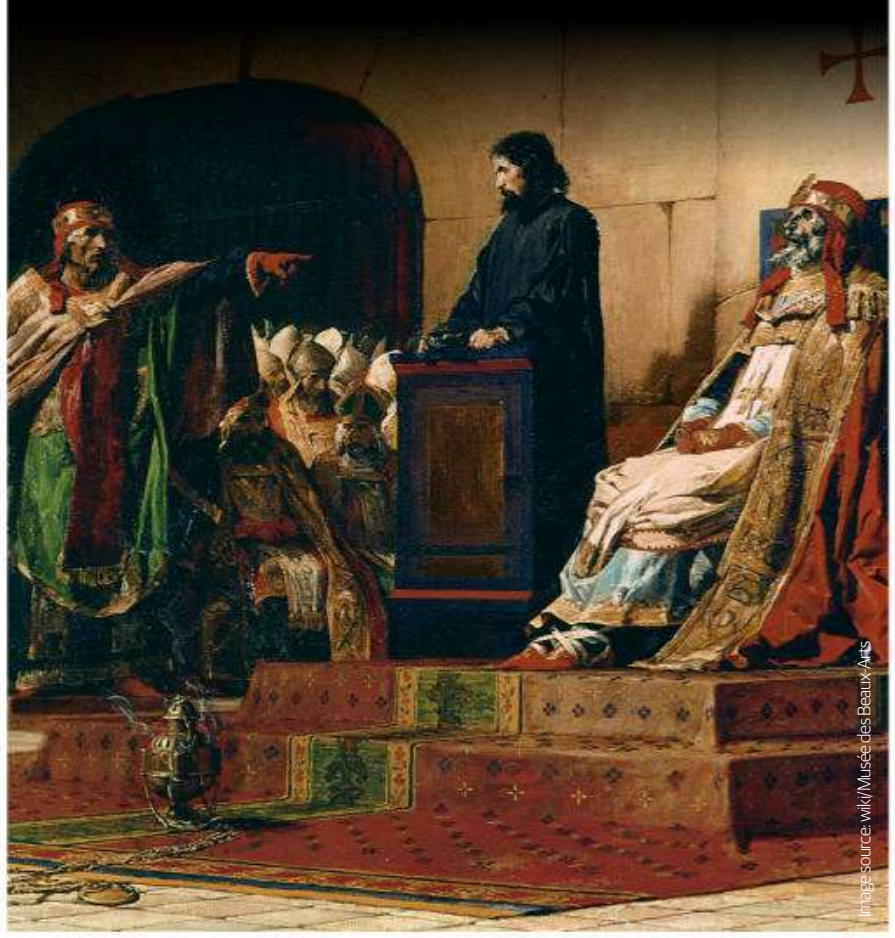
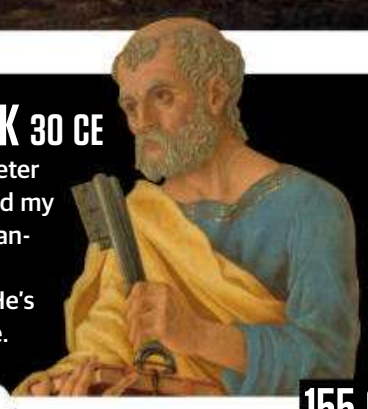


Image source: wiki/Musée des Beaux-Arts

THE CHURCH'S ROCK 30 CE

After Jesus says, "You are Peter and upon this rock I will build my church," the former fisherman-turned-disciple becomes a leader of the early Church. He's eventually crucified in Rome.



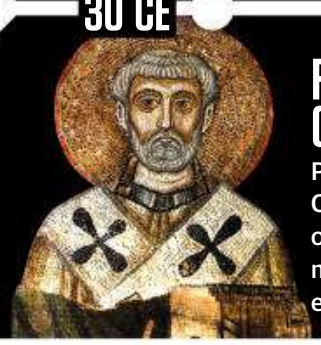
EASTER SUNDAY 155 CE

By the time Pope Pius I dies, following a 15-year reign, he has decreed Easter should only be marked on a Sunday, a tradition that continues today.

SEIZING POWER 756

Having required approval of the Byzantine emperors for episcopal consecration, the papacy is now given control over large parts of central Italy. The Donation of Pepin creates the Papal States.

30 CE — 155 CE — 312 CE — 756

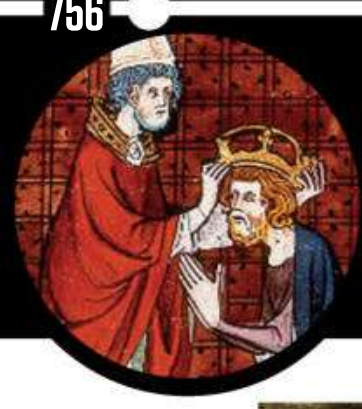


FIRST EPISTLE OF CLEMENT 96 CE

Pope Clement I writes to the Christian Church in Corinth opposing the deposition of elder men from the ministry. It helps establish episcopal orders.

END OF AN EMPIRE 476 CE

The Germanic leader Odoacer deposes Emperor Romulus Augustulus, ending the Western Roman Empire. Within 20 years, the papacy is influenced by the kingdom of Italy.



POPE CROWNS AN EMPEROR 800

Pope Leo III crowns Charlemagne (a staunch defender of Christianity) emperor of the Romans on 25 December, but it sets up two separate empires.

THE FIRST CHURCHES 312 CE

Constantine becomes emperor of the Western Roman Empire and he patronises Christianity. This is made clear in the *Edict of Milan* and it leads to the development of the first church buildings after years of people worshipping at home. The Archbasilica of Saint John Lateran is consecrated in 324 CE - Rome's oldest public church.

Image source: wiki/Livioandronico2013

DONATION OF CONSTANTINE EXPOSED 1439

The *Donation of Constantine* - a decree supposedly created in the 4th century that records Constantine the Great's handing of territory and temporal power to Pope Sylvester I - is declared a forgery by Italian Catholic priest Lorenzo Valla. It's likely to have been written in the 8th century.

Doubt had been cast over the authenticity of the *Donation of Constantine* ever since the year 1001

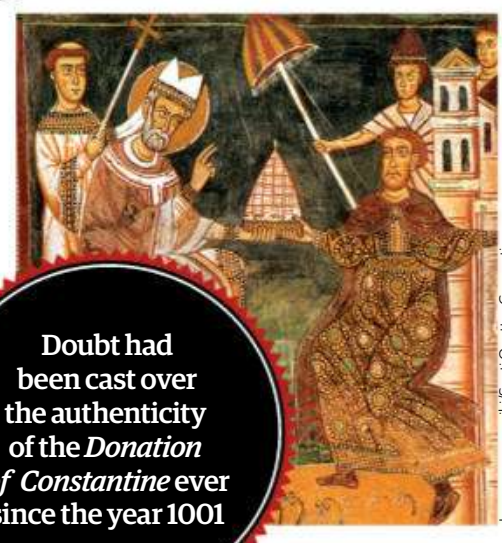


Image source: wiki/Santi Quattro Coronati

Vatican City, which was granted sovereign independence by the Lateran Treaty (1929), is just 44 hectares

REIGN OF THE PAPAL STATES ENDS 1870

The Papal States – territory encompassing much of central Italy under the direct sovereign rule of the pope – is entirely lost after 1,114 years having been conquered by the Kingdom of Italy. A small area – The Vatican – is handed back in 1929 and becomes an independent city state.

Image source: wiki/italianostra-milano.org

THE INVESTITURE CONTROVERSY 1048

Medieval Europe is torn between church and state as popes challenge the authority of monarchies. Disagreement rages over who has the power to appoint bishops.

THE SHORT-TERM HERMIT 1294

Celestine V, a hermit who lived in a cave, is pope for just five months when he becomes the first pontiff to voluntarily abdicate. Successor Boniface VIII imprisons him.

A PEACE TREATY 1797

The Papal States signs the Treaty of Tolentino with Revolutionary France, ending Napoleon's second invasion just a year after the first.

1048 — 1294 — 1508 — 1797 — 1870

THE CRUSADES 1096

The religious wars aimed at taking back Holy Land from the early Muslim conquests are sparked by Pope Urban II. They continue until 1291.

THE ENGLISH REFORMATION 1509

The king of England, Henry VIII, clashes with Pope Clement VII over his desired annulment from wife Catherine of Aragon, leading the Church of England to break from papal authority.

VATICAN DECLARES NEUTRALITY 1939 CE

Fearing Italian occupation, the Vatican declares neutrality after Germany invades Poland. Pope Pius XII discreetly sends aid to Jews.

Image sources: wiki/Rob Koopman, wiki/Museo del Prado, wiki/Etats pontificaux, wiki/Mediaeval and Modern History, wiki/Ruggerofilippo, wiki/Google Cultural Institute

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PAINTING OF THE SISTINE CHAPEL 1508

Renaissance artist Michelangelo takes four years to paint the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel at the commission of Pope Julius II. The chapel itself was consecrated in 1483 in the Pope's official residence, the Apostolic Palace in Vatican City, and it's where the College of Cardinals have elected a new pope since 1492.

POPE JOHN PAUL II'S ATTEMPTED ASSASSINATION 1981

Turkish gunman Mehmet Ali Ağca shoots Pope John Paul II as he enters St Peter's Square to address an audience on 13 May. Although he recovers (and forgives Ağca), Polish John Paul II – the first non-Italian pope since the 16th century – was badly injured. Another unsuccessful attempt on his life is made the following year.

2x © Getty Images

ST PETER'S BASILICA

Vatican City
1506-1626 CE

When Rome was decimated by the Great Fire of 64 CE, the emperor Nero, desperate for a scapegoat, blamed the disaster on the emerging Christian community. Among those who perished in his circus executions was St Peter. Christ's disciple and the first Bishop of Rome. After three centuries of struggle, the Christians were finally granted their freedom under Constantine, who went on to build a magnificent basilica on St Peter's tomb.

However, by 1500, after numerous sackings and calamities, the once-magnificent basilica lay in ruin, and Pope Julius II decided it was time to replace it with an even more spectacular building. Under the direction of architect Donato Bramante, the old walls were spectacularly pulled down, and a new foundation stone laid in 1506. Bramante designed his basilica in the form of a Greek Cross, and began excavating and erecting four structural piers to support the dome.

After the deaths of Julius in 1513 and Bramante the following year, the work continued sporadically under various popes and architects. The genius Michelangelo was already in his 70s when he reluctantly took over the project, "without pay and without reward", breathing some much-needed clarity and vigour into it over the next 18 years. While Giacomo Della Porta completed the dome in 1590, it was Carlo Maderno who won a competition in 1607 to build the façade – tearing down the front wall and extending its eastern end, transforming it into a Latin Cross.

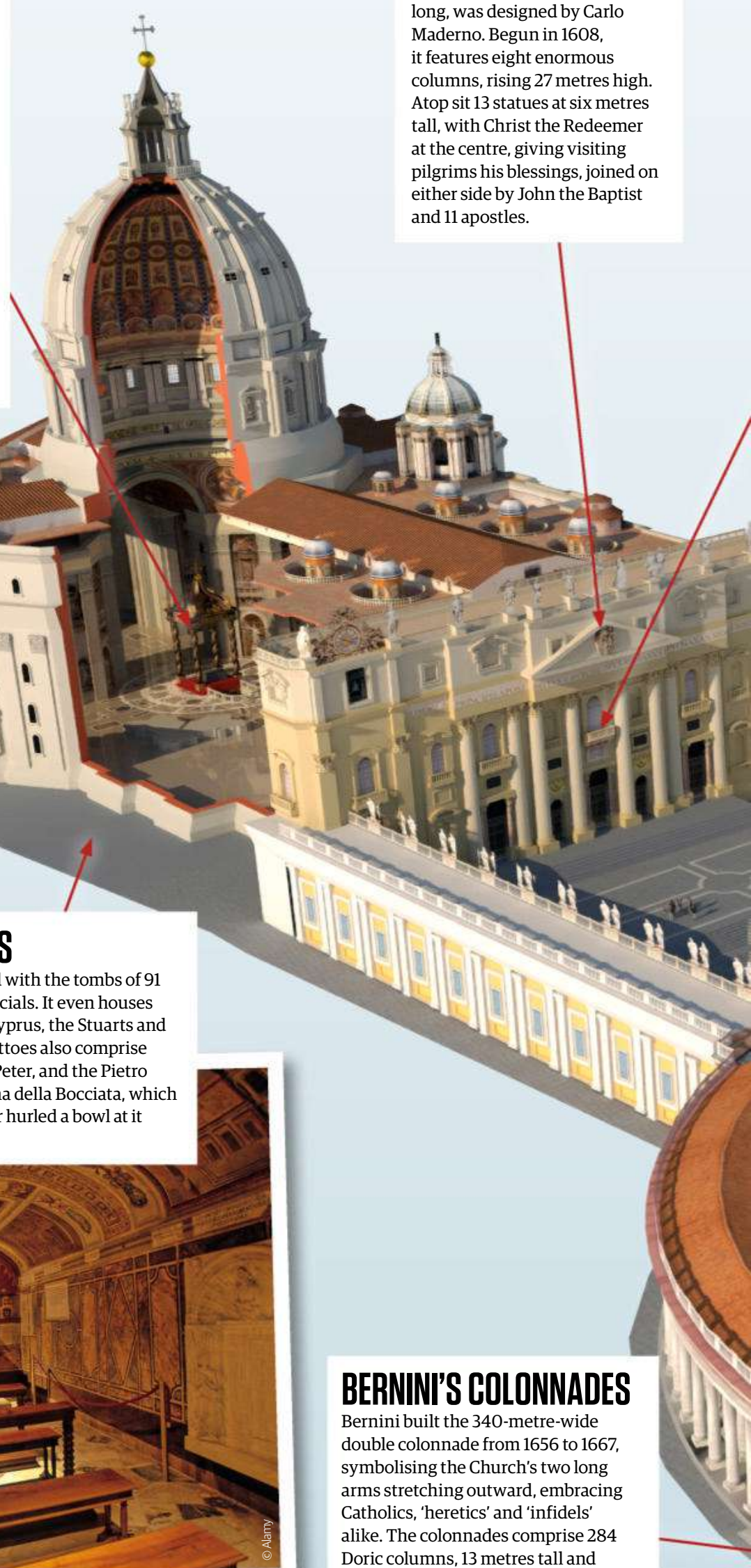
The project was finally completed by Gian Lorenzo Bernini, who added its colonnades, before finally being consecrated in 1626 – 1,300 years after its first incarnation. The centrepiece at the very heart of Christendom, St Peter's had an enormous impact on art and architecture, with masters travelling from across the world to study it. The largest church in the world to this day, it remains a crucial Christian pilgrimage site, capable of hosting 15,000 worshippers inside, and a further 80,000 in the Square beyond.

THE PAPAL ALTAR AND BALDACHIN

In the centre of the Basilica, directly below Michelangelo's Dome, and above St Peter's Tomb, is the Altar of the Confessio, carved from a huge block of marble. Above stands the bronze baldachin, which Bernini spent nine years creating. Some of this bronze was melted down from ancient girders from the Pantheon's portico, giving rise to the epigram, "What the barbarians didn't do, the Barberini did", in reference to Pope Urban VIII's Barberini family.

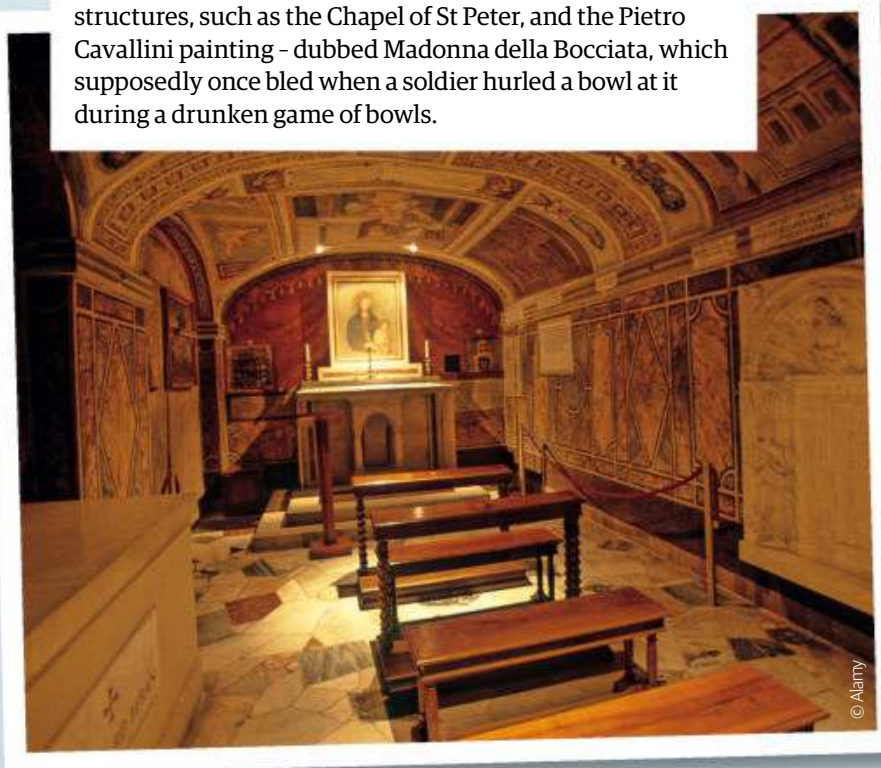
MADERNO'S FAÇADE

The Basilica's remarkable travertine facade, stretching 45 metres tall and 114 metres long, was designed by Carlo Maderno. Begun in 1608, it features eight enormous columns, rising 27 metres high. Atop sit 13 statues at six metres tall, with Christ the Redeemer at the centre, giving visiting pilgrims his blessings, joined on either side by John the Baptist and 11 apostles.



THE VATICAN GROTTOES

Below the Basilica lies a grotto, filled with the tombs of 91 popes, and various other church officials. It even houses the remains of Queen Charlotte of Cyprus, the Stuarts and Queen Christina of Sweden. The grottoes also comprise structures, such as the Chapel of St Peter, and the Pietro Cavallini painting – dubbed Madonna della Bocciata, which supposedly once bled when a soldier hurled a bowl at it during a drunken game of bowls.


© Alamy

BERNINI'S COLONNADES

Bernini built the 340-metre-wide double colonnade from 1656 to 1667, symbolising the Church's two long arms stretching outward, embracing Catholics, 'heretics' and 'infidels' alike. The colonnades comprise 284 Doric columns, 13 metres tall and arranged in four rows, alongside 88 pillars of travertine marble. Above the balustrade sit 140 statues of saints, while a pair of eight-metre statues of Peter and Paul mark the entrance.

LOGGIA OF THE BLESSINGS

In the middle of the facade sits the Loggia of the Blessings, the central balcony where the new pope is announced, and gives his first blessing, as well as the regular Easter and Christmas blessings. A relief beneath the balcony, by Buonvicino, depicts Jesus handing St Peter the keys to the kingdom.

THE HOLY DOOR

The furthest door on the right of the Basilica, the Porta Sancta, or Holy Door, is sealed from the inside, and only opened once every 25 years. Then, on the first day of the Holy Year, the Pope hits the brick wall with a silver hammer, revealing the bronze panels created by Vico Consorti in 1949. The Door will next be opened in 2025.

© Getty Images

THE PORTICO

From the Square, five entrances open into the Portico, with five more doors leading through to the Basilica. Created by Maderno, the Portico stretches 71 metres long and 20 metres high, decorated with the papal coat of arms, inscriptions and religious imagery. Its vault features a series of magnificent stucco reliefs, depicting the Acts of the Apostles. At either end stand equestrian statues, with Constantine in the north and Charlemagne in the south.

THE OBELISK

In the centre of St Peter's Square stands a magnificent 25-metre-tall obelisk, atop an eight-metre-wide base. Hewn from a single block, the ancient Egyptian obelisk was brought to Rome and erected in the circus by Caligula in 37 CE. In 1586, Pope Sixtus V had it moved to the centre of St Peter's Square – a feat that took 900 men, 140 horses and 44 winches to complete.

ST PETER'S SQUARE

Begun under the direction of Bernini in 1657, St Peter's Square was built in just 10 years, stretching out into a remarkable ellipse, 320 metres long and 240 metres wide. Every Sunday, revellers gather in the Square to listen to the Pope recite prayers from a window, and receive the Apostolic Blessing.

Illustration by: Adrian Mann

Anatomy

PONTIFICAL SWISS GUARD

Vatican City
1506 - present

HEAVY HEADWEAR

The Swiss Guards traditionally wore metal morion helmets complete with coloured feathers – dyed ostrich feathers are used today. On the side of the helmets is the oak tree, the symbol of the Della Rovere, Pope Julius II's family.

PLATE ARMOUR

In the 16th century, the Swiss Guards wore armour on the top half of the body with a doublet underneath. Metal cuirasses are still worn by the guardsmen today, but only for swearing-in ceremonies, Easter and Christmas.

BRAVE FIGHTERS

During the Sack of Rome in 1527, 189 guardsmen fought against the troops of Emperor Charles V to defend Pope Clement VII. Greatly outnumbered, only 42 of them survived, but due to their sacrifice the Pope managed to escape Vatican City alive.

TRADITIONAL WEAPONS

The halberd was the weapon of choice for Swiss mercenaries in the 16th century, alongside a sword at the waist. The Swiss Guard still use halberds as ceremonial weapons today, some of which are as much as five centuries old.

DISPUTED DESIGNER

Michelangelo, one of the greatest artists of the Renaissance, is often cited as the creator of the Swiss Guard's distinctive uniform, but this is debated. However, it is said that the current uniform – introduced in 1914 – was influenced by the frescoes of Michelangelo's contemporary, Raphael.

PROTECTING THE POPE

The Swiss Guards were founded in 1506 when Pope Julius II hired Swiss mercenaries to act as his personal bodyguards. Today, the Swiss Guards are one of the oldest military units still in operation in the world.

TRICOLOUR UNIFORM

The Swiss Guard uniform colours – red, yellow and blue – were the colours of the Medici family. Originally, the Swiss Guards only wore yellow and blue, which represented the coat of arms of Pope Julius II. The colour red was added to the uniform by Pope Leo X, a Medici.

Illustration by: Kevin McGivern

Historical Treasures

THE SCHOOL OF ATHENS

Raphael's masterpiece of the High Renaissance
Vatican City, 1509-11

Thanks to the Avignon Papacy and the Western Schism in the 14th century, the absence of the popes in Rome left the city neglected, with dilapidated churches and buildings. As a result, cultural patronage in the early years of the Renaissance played an essential role in bolstering the prestige of the papacy, with numerous popes becoming patrons of architecture, art and literature.

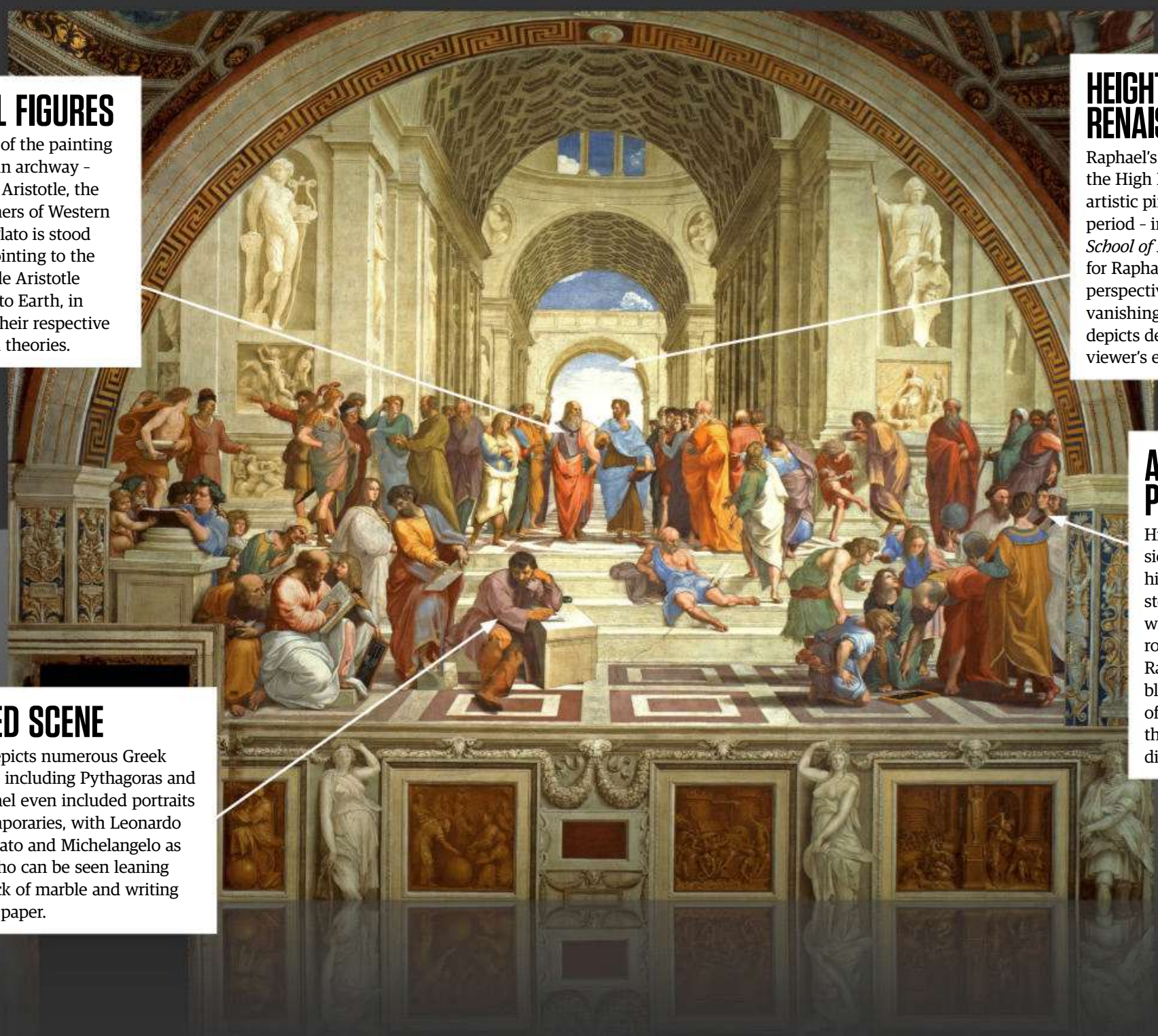
Although patronage was used to restore papal power, the popes usually sponsored personal projects of their own, which demonstrated their power and helped to cement their individual legacies. In turn, this provided steady work that allowed several Renaissance artists to flourish during this period.

The election of Pope Martin V in 1417 marked the end of the schism, and three years later he returned to Rome, where he quickly got to work restoring the city. Through the various commissions of subsequent popes, Rome eventually became a centre for the Italian Renaissance. One of the most famous examples of these commissions is the rebuilding and restoration of the Sistine Chapel on the orders of Pope Sixtus IV, who hired painters such as Botticelli and Ghirlandaio to decorate it.

The chapel's ceiling was painted by Michelangelo under the patronage of Pope Julius II, Sixtus IV's nephew, one of the most prolific patrons of the 16th century. A noted patron of the architect Bramante, Julius spent vast amounts on his art patronage while managing to leave the papal treasury full upon his death.

In 1508, Julius invited the painter Raphael to redecorate four reception rooms at the Vatican's Apostolic Palace, which have since become known as the 'Raphael Rooms'. It is believed that Julius wanted to outshine the rooms of his predecessor, Pope Alexander VI, who had commissioned the nearby Borgia Apartments.

The first room to be decorated, the Stanza della Segnatura, was Julius's library and private office. It contains Raphael's most famous fresco, *The School of Athens*, which depicts an imaginary gathering of Greek philosophers. An allegory for rational truth, it is regarded as one of the most important frescoes in history.



CENTRAL FIGURES

In the centre of the painting – framed by an archway – are Plato and Aristotle, the founding fathers of Western philosophy. Plato is stood on the left pointing to the heavens, while Aristotle points down to Earth, in reference to their respective philosophical theories.

HEIGHT OF THE RENAISSANCE

Raphael's frescoes marked the High Renaissance – the artistic pinnacle of the period – in Rome. *The School of Athens* is noted for Raphael's use of linear perspective with a central vanishing point, which depicts depth and draws the viewer's eyes to the centre.

ARTIST'S SELF-PORTRAIT

Hidden away at the side, Raphael painted himself into the fresco stood next to Ptolemy, who wears a yellow robe and holds a globe. Raphael is wearing a black beret, and is one of the only figures in the painting to stare directly at the viewer.

IDEALISED SCENE

The fresco depicts numerous Greek philosophers, including Pythagoras and Euclid. Raphael even included portraits of his contemporaries, with Leonardo da Vinci as Plato and Michelangelo as Heraclitus, who can be seen leaning against a block of marble and writing on a piece of paper.

© Getty Images

GREATEST POPES

The popes who have shaped the Catholic Church in its 2,000 years

POPE SIXTUS IV
GENOAN/ITALIAN, 1414-1484

Born Francesco della Rovere, the Sistine Chapel was built under his papacy. He also helped found the Vatican Library.

But when it came to politics, Sixtus was unlucky. He waged war to gain Ferrara for his nephew, but lost, and he piled money and titles on his family.

In religion, he opposed the Waldensian heresy and founded the Spanish Inquisition. It's a shame, then, that his nepotism is credited with beginning the papacy's moral decay.

Image source: wiki/ Uffizi

POPE PAUL III
ITALIAN, 1468-1549

Paul III was the last of the Renaissance popes and the first of the Counter-Reformation. He was also the first to put together a robust response to the Protestant Reformation. Part of his plan was setting up the Congregation of the Roman Inquisition, which aimed to suppress Protestant teaching in papal territories. He also confirmed the excommunication of Henry VIII in 1538.

However, nepotism was rife in his reign. His illegitimate son was given titles, causing friction with Holy Roman Emperor Charles V. He also appointed two of his grandsons to significant positions and furthered his family's economic and political interests.

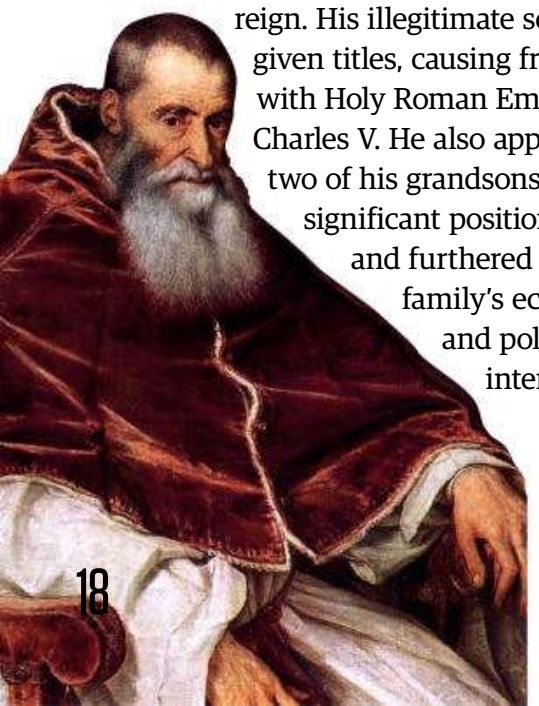


Image source: wiki/ Web Gallery of Art

Pope Clement VII
Florentine/Italian, 1478-1534

Clement VII wasn't the first Medici to rise to pope, but he was one of the most memorable. Having been brought up by his uncle Lorenzo the Magnificent, he was raised alongside his cousin, another future pope.

As pope, Clement VII didn't have the best of times. Holy Roman Emperor Charles V sacked Rome in 1527, making Clement a prisoner in Castel Sant'Angelo. He also had the misfortune of wearing the papal tiara when Henry VIII started divorce proceedings against Catherine of Aragon.

Clement is considered to have been the last Renaissance pope, and was a patron of Machiavelli, Michelangelo and Raphael

Image source: wiki/ Museo di Capodimonte

POPE GREGORY I
ROMAN, 540-604 CE

Although he later became a saint, Gregory initially refused the office of pope. However, his tenure saw the advent of the Medieval Church. Celibacy was enforced, sinful officials removed, and his book, *On Pastoral Care*, became the handbook for Christianity.

Gregory was also involved in politics, negotiating an end of the Lombard siege of Rome in 592. He was also the mastermind behind Augustine's mission to convert Britain to Christianity in 596.

His name is still prevalent in the Christian Church thanks to the Gregorian chant, which was collected and codified during his premiership.

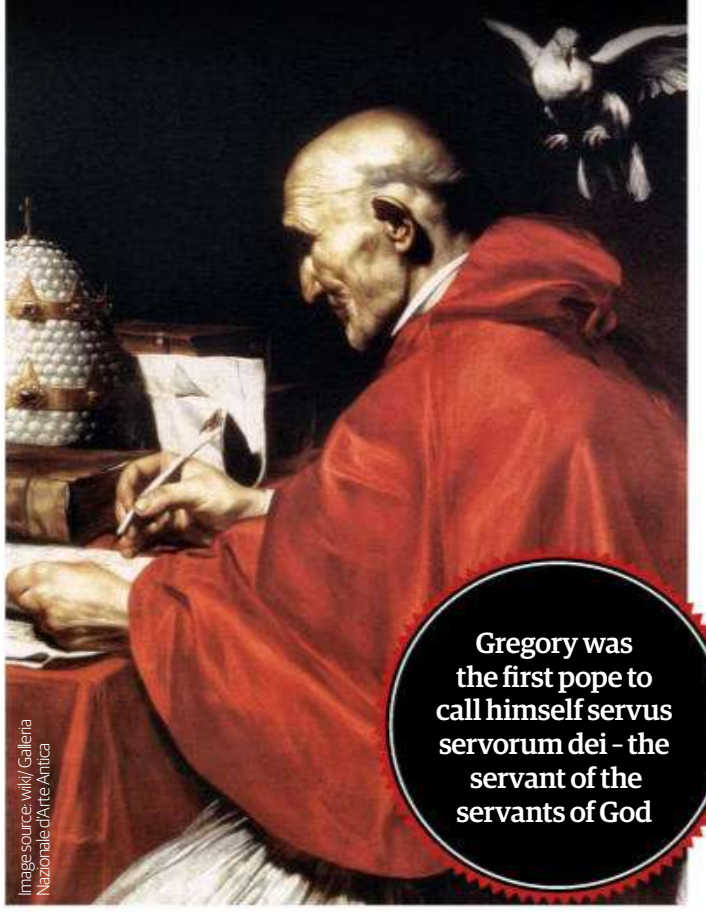


Image source: wiki/ Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Antica

Gregory was the first pope to call himself servus servorum dei – the servant of the servants of God

POPE ADRIAN IV
ENGLISH, C.1100-1159

The only English pope, Adrian IV's rule of the Catholic Church holds a unique place in history. His papacy saw approval for the conquest of Ireland given to Henry II of England, an alliance with the king of Sicily, and he let serfs marry without the consent of their lords.

Adrian's rise to power was extraordinary. He came from humble beginnings in the English countryside, rose through the ranks in France, and was noticed by Pope Eugenius III on a visit to Rome.

Image source: wiki/ daten.digitale-sammlungen.de

Image source: wiki/ Google Cultural Institute

POPE URBAN VIII
FLORENTINE/ITALIAN, 1568-1644

Heading up the Catholic Church for almost 21 years, Urban VIII left a lasting legacy on the papacy and Rome. He completed St Peter's, built the Palazzo Barberini and commissioned the papal villa at Castel Gandolfo.

Perhaps most famously, Urban VIII opposed Galileo's view of the Earth revolving around the Sun. This saw the scientist kept under house arrest until his death about a decade later.

Pope Pius IX
Papal States/Italian, 1792-1878

The gates to the Jewish Ghetto in the Papal States were destroyed by Pius IX in early 1848

Image source: wiki/ rct.uk

Pius began his papacy with followers literally singing his praises outside the papal palace window, but that was soon to change. The Italian unification was a sticking point – while Pius IX was the religious head of almost everyone in the Italian peninsula, he refused to dride out Austrians in the northeast. In a violent riot, Pius had to flee the papal palace. The Papal States faded as Italy finally came together.

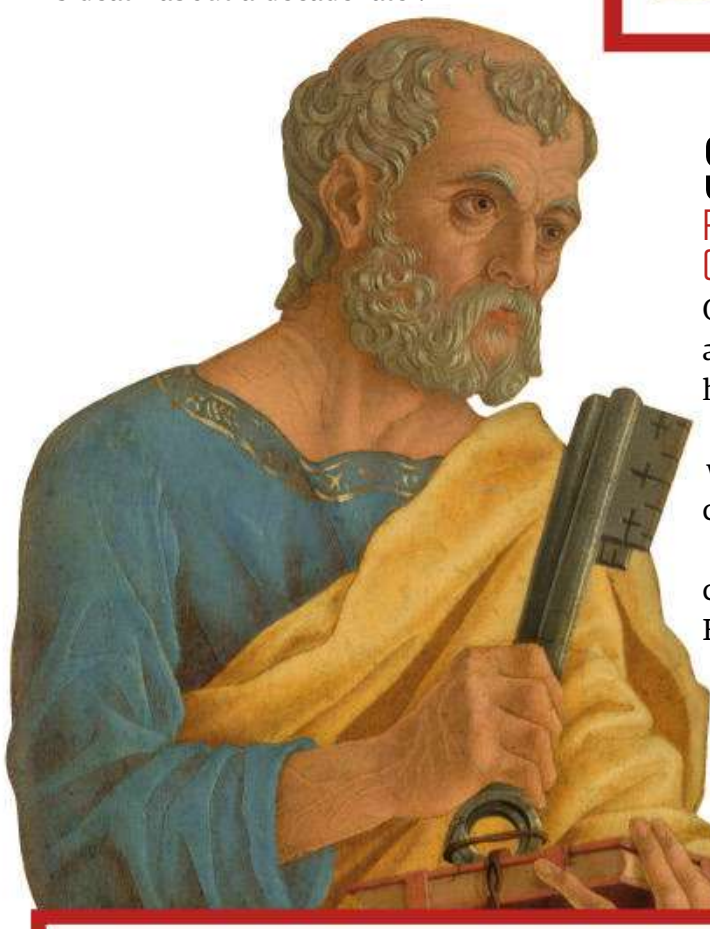
He eventually returned to Rome and his popularity rose again. However, he proclaimed himself a prisoner of the Vatican, and called anyone who supported the Italian state a sinner.

POPE LEO I
ROMAN, C.400 CE-461 CE

Leo I has been remembered for his combative nature against Christian heresies. He defended Christianity from Pelagianism and Manichaeism, as well as potential Eastern separatists.

But perhaps his most enduring legacy is how he led Rome's defence against the barbarian invasion of Italy in 452 CE. He faced off against Attila the Hun and made peace – Attila left Rome untouched.

Image source: wiki/ Museo Del Prado



SAINT PETER
ROMAN (BORN IN MODERN-DAY ISRAEL), C.1-64 CE

One of the 12 disciples, Peter was appointed bishop of Rome by Christ himself. A fisherman born into a Jewish family, Peter – whose name was actually Simeon or Simon – later converted to Christianity.

In the years following Jesus' crucifixion, Peter dominated the Church. He preached at the first Pentecost and travelled around the Middle East. He eventually reached Rome, but no one really knows what he did. What we do know is that he was crucified by Emperor Nero in 64 CE.

Image source: wiki/Rob Koopman

Pope John XXIII
Italian, 1881-1963

John XXIII was proud of his humble beginnings, and credited it for his refusal to indulge in nepotism

Upon John XXIII's death, newspapers lamented 'Il Papa Buono' (The Good Pope). Loved by all, he had risen from rural poverty to enter the priesthood before taking a break to serve as a medical orderly and military chaplain in World War I.
In the inter-war years he rose through the Church's ranks, eventually serving as a representative of the Vatican in Turkey and Greece in World War II. There he provided transit visas and other paperwork for Jews, helping them leave Europe. This saw him named one of the Righteous Among Nations.

As pope, he overhauled the Vatican Council, and even played a vital role in stopping the Cuban Missile Crisis.

Image source: wiki/ Rossel44

Q&A with...

CATHERINE FLETCHER

With conflict on its doorstep, how did the Vatican handle the Italian Wars?

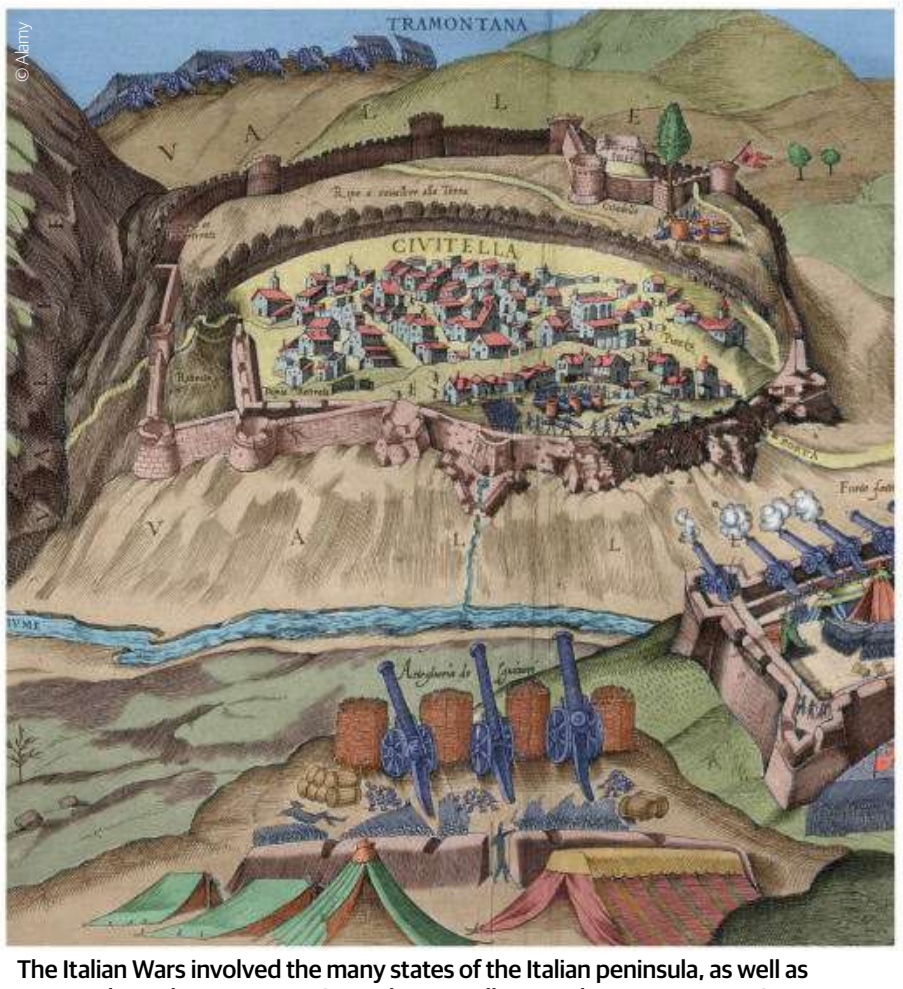
Why did Italy become the focus of powers from across Europe?

It's one of the two particularly wealthy areas of Europe. You've got Italy on one hand, and then the low countries, the Netherlands, on the other. So it's natural that the larger states of Europe have an interest in ensuring their influence in those areas, and you really have two big states in play at this point. You have France, which had been consolidating into something approaching its modern shape for a while. And then you have Spain, which had been unified much more recently under Ferdinand and Isabella, who then conquered Andalusia. They're in the process of expanding their influence, and it's an illegitimate line of the House of Aragon that actually rules Naples at the point that the Italian Wars start, but the kings of France have also got a claim to rule Naples via the Anjou/Angevin line.

Fletcher is a historian of Renaissance and early modern Europe whose books include *The Black Prince Of Florence* and *The Divorce Of Henry VIII*. Her most recent book on the darker side of the Italian Renaissance is available now in hardback, and in paperback from March 2021.

How powerful was the Vatican at this point compared to these European powers?

The Pope is this very odd kind of ruler because he does two things. On the one hand he is the Pope; he is the vicar of Christ on Earth, he is the head of the Catholic Church, and he has an enormous amount of authority on that religious basis within western Christendom. When Henry VII gets his crown on the battlefield at Bosworth, he has to be formally recognised by the Pope for everyone to be absolutely assured that other claimants aren't going to get a look in. So he has this really important supranational role, but then there is another side to the Pope, which is that he is the ruler of a modest-sized state within central Italy that we call the Papal States. That stretches out from Rome, around Florence to Bologna and Ravenna on the Adriatic coast.



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The Italian Wars involved the many states of the Italian peninsula, as well as France, the Holy Roman Empire and eventually even the Ottoman Empire

> **"It's a problem politically because it just does not look good to have the Pope as your hostage"**

To what degree did the Peninsula being the home of the Vatican make it more of a target?

The reason that Rome as a whole is a target is because there's a system of financing these wars in which the commanders don't really have quite enough money to pay their troops as they should, and one of the ways they sort this out is by saying, "Look guys, I can't really pay your wages, but I will let you sack whatever big city we come to next." And then they just raid everybody's houses, grab as much booty as possible, etc. Obviously, Rome being a very wealthy city with lots of rich people, it being a major European centre, makes it a very attractive target for sacking, but that's more about money than it is about religion. When they do sack Rome in 1527, it's kind of embarrassing for Charles V because the Pope is meant to be the representative of Christ on Earth, and that's not really a good look if you're meant to be the Holy Roman Emperor, respecting holiness and Rome and so on. So it's a very attractive military target because of the money and the power that's there, but it's a problem politically because it just does not look good to have the Pope as your hostage.

Are there any popes from this period who stand out as being particularly ambitious?

The famous ones are the Borgias, who have this reputation for being worse than all the rest. I'm not quite convinced about that, because if you look, there's a series of Popes who in one way or another used their Papacy to promote relatives. You see Sixtus IV do it for Giuliano Della Rovere, who then becomes Pope Julius II. A little further down the line we see Rodrigo Borgia becomes Alexander VI, and he gets his daughter Lucrezia married off three times, which was a little bit awkward.

Headshot source: © Alamy

The Sack of Rome took place during the War of the League of Cognac as Charles V's underpaid German troops sought restitution for their contribution to the war

Image source: wiki/L'Histoire

The third time she becomes Duchess of Ferrara, and her brother (Rodrigo's son) Cesare makes a decent attempt to set himself up with a private state in Romagna near to Bologna.
It's fairly standard to take the view that one of the things that you can and perhaps should do as Pope is to make sure that you're looking after the members of your own family. That's a general part of the culture of the period. Everybody sees a responsibility and duty towards supporting ones relatives as the right thing to do.

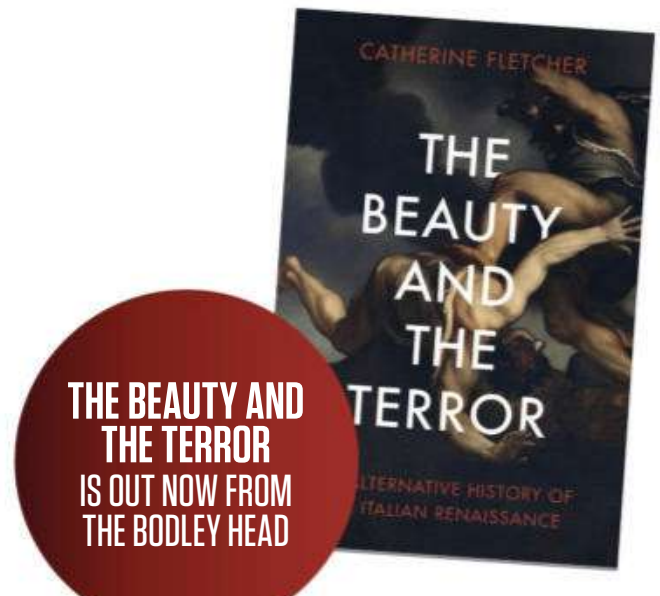
That's where we get the word nepotism from – the word nipote meaning nephew, sometimes literally, although 'nephew' could also mean illegitimate children who would be called nipote for appearances sake. So the idea that you have a nephew who gets promoted, partially to support you in the college of cardinals, but also because you want to look after your family, it's part of that overall picture at the time.

© Alamy

ABOVE This period proved to be one of the last major engagements of French heavy cavalry, or gendarmes, as pistols became preferred to lances on the battlefield

What was the lasting legacy of the Italian Wars on the papacy?

One of the biggest impacts of the wars on the Catholic Church is that they actually made them quite slow to respond to what was going on with Protestantism. From 1517 on you have the Medici Popes in power (with about 18 months of Adrian VI between them), with Leo X and then Clement VII in power from 1513 to 1534, the best part of 20 years. They are really, really focused on their family interests, on consolidating their family's Florentine rule in a very problematic time when in fact they lose all of their legitimate male heirs to the family. Arguably they take their eye off the ball when it comes to what on Earth is going on with this new religious challenge. It's only after 1534 when Alessandro Farnese is elected as Paul III that you start to get this serious discussion that they really have to do something about reform now. I think if I were to say what the one big impact of the Italian Wars was, then it is in slowing up the discussions that there might have been around avoiding an open schism.

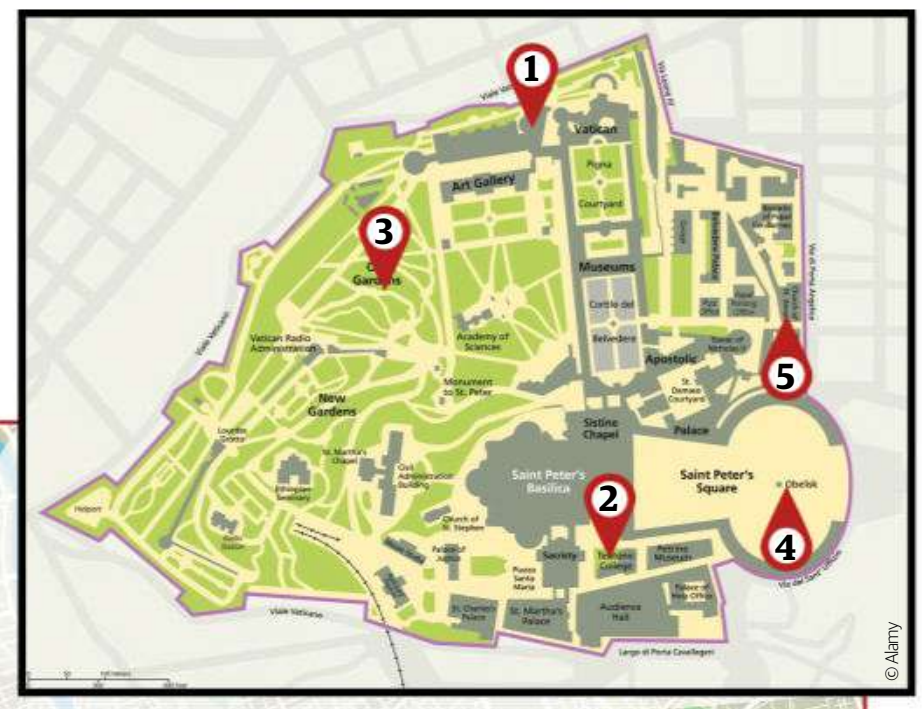


THE BEAUTY AND THE TERROR
IS OUT NOW FROM THE BODLEY HEAD

Places to Explore

VATICAN MUSEUMS

Incredible places to visit and learn Papal history



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1 VATICAN MUSEUMS
VIALE VATICANO

No trip to the Vatican City is complete without visiting the museums. All included in one ticket, along with the Sistine Chapel, you'll walk along corridors of ancient Roman statues and explore rooms filled to the brim with Renaissance art. There's a reason it's visited by over 6 million people every year.

Founded in 1503, the papal collection on display was started by Pope Julius II, and has been expanded ever since. Clement XIV and Pius VI collected Greek works, while Pius V was a fan of 15th- and 16th-century Flemish tapestries and Medieval ceramics. It now holds thousands of statues, tapestries, paintings, ceramics and more.

Everything is separated into separate mini museums, all linked together into an interesting and historic day out. The grouping does have an advantage, too – if you're more of a Classicist, you can focus on the relevant parts of the museum, like the Pio-Clementino Museum and the Gregorian Profane Museum. Medievalists can head straight to the Borgia Apartment – the actual apartments that belonged to Pope Alexander VI – and the Gallery of Maps.

While your ticket also includes small archaeological sites and some of the pontifical villas, your trip will end with the real showstopper: the Sistine Chapel. The 15th-century frescoes painted by Michelangelo, Perugino, Botticelli, Ghirlandaio and Rosselli are a sight to behold. Everyone in the room will be looking up – where else would you look when surrounded by such stunning artwork?

€17 + $4 if booking online (which is recommended)
Open daily, www.museivaticani.va

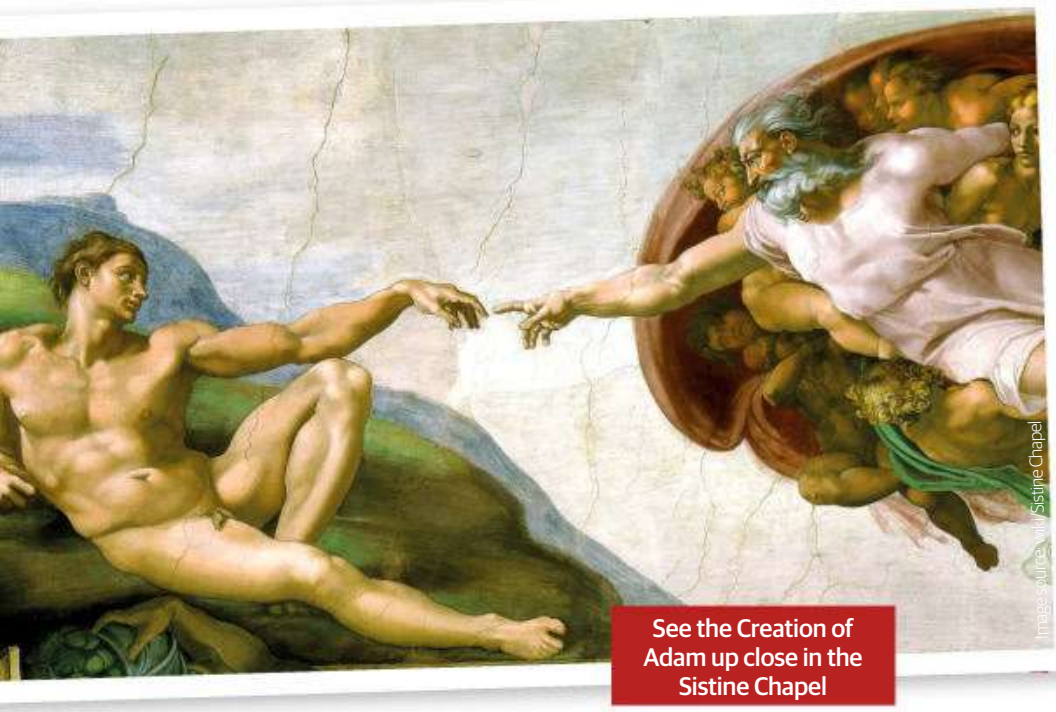
Image source: wiki/Sistine Chapel

See the Creation of Adam up close in the Sistine Chapel

2 CAMPO SANTO TEUTONICO
VIA DELLA SACRESTIA

Image source: wiki/Johannes Nutler

The cemetery from above

If you're after a moment of peace and quiet, take a stroll off St Peter's Square and enter the Campo Santo Teutonico. The burial place of members of the Arch-Brotherhood of the Sorrowful Mother of God and some other German religious communities, it's a tranquil cemetery steeped in history.

Some of the graves date back to the 15th century, which is when the brotherhood was founded. Notable burials include archaeologist Ludwig Curtius, Joseph Anton Koch and Gustav Adolf, Cardinal Prince of Hohenlohe-Schillingsfurst. But there's a reason this patch of land was chosen as a Christian burial ground. In the early days of the Roman Empire it formed part of 'Nero's Circus', which was home to some of the first Christian martyrdoms in Rome, according to Tacitus.

The final resting place for generations of people, visitors are asked to wear clothes that cover their shoulders and knees, and allow time for security checks by the Swiss Guard.

7am-midday every day except Wednesday, free entry
www.vatican.va/various/teutonico/2.htm

Enjoy a view of the basilica that not many get to see

Image source: Pixabay/sahinsezerdincer

A guided tour of the Vatican Gardens is well worth it

3 VATICAN GARDENS
VIA PAOLO VI

Sprawled over one third of the Vatican's territory, the Vatican Gardens are a sight to behold. With fountains, sculptures and grottoes nestled alongside a heliport and radio station, it's a unique day out steeped in history.

Tours will take you around the most beautiful parts of the gardens. You'll travel through the Giardino Quadrato, see the Fontana dell'Aquilone and explore the Grotta di Lourdes, built in the first decade of the 20th century.

You'll discover three distinct styles as you travel. The Italian gardens are formal and geometric, reflecting the Renaissance, while the French gardens lean more towards the Baroque. The English gardens, meanwhile, focus on natural and artificial caves, streams, trees, shrubs, pergolas, temples and ruins.

That's not all you'll find in the Vatican Gardens, though. Alongside chapels and small forts, you'll also come across a segment of the Berlin Wall, a gift from Italian Marco Piccininni in 1994 after he won it at an auction in Monte Carlo four years earlier. You can also enjoy a unique view of St Peter's Basilica that not many get to see.

9am-6pm daily except Wednesdays and Sundays, by guided tour only
Adult/reduced incl Vatican Museums €33/24, by open-air bus €37/23
www.rome-museum.com/vatican-gardens.php

4 ST PETER'S SQUARE
VATICAN CITY

If you don't do anything else in Vatican City, you have to stand in St Peter's Square and just take it all in. 320 metres long and 240 metres wide, you can walk the iconic 284-column colonnade and see the 140 statues of saints above them that date back to 1667.

It has been the site of many special services and papal addresses, but on the average day you can expect to see the 25-metre-tall obelisk, and the two famous fountains, Bernini and Maderno, both dating to the 17th century. Not much is known about the obelisk's origins, but we do know that it was supposed to be erected in Heliopolis. It made its way to Rome at the behest of Emperor Caligula (no mean feat at 326 tons), and finally came to St Peter's Square in 1586.

The view of St Peter's Square from the basilica

Image source: Pixabay/bergsteigerin

With Italy behind you, you can stare up at the impressive facade of St Peter's Basilica – an especially spectacular view at night when everything is illuminated.

Open all day, free entry
www.rome.net/st-peters-square

Image source: wiki/Mattes

The unassuming exterior of the church

Image source: Pixabay/walterlanpapetti

5 SANT'ANNA DEI PALAFRENIERI
VIA SANT'ANNA

While this church is dwarfed by St Peter's Basilica just a stone's throw away, its historical value is no less. Founded in 1565 and finished in 1583, it's a rare example of a surviving 16th-century oval church. The design was entrusted to architect Giacomo Barozzi, also known as Vignola, but it wasn't officially completed until the 18th century, when the facade, dome and frescoes were created.

Its history continues, though. On 30 May 1929, Pope Pius XI established the pontifical parish of Sant'Anna in the Vatican. The first parish priest – Father Agostino Ruelli – was appointed in August that year, and the church has been in the charge of the Augustinians ever since.

Located right next to Porta Sant'Anna, one of the entrances into the Vatican City and right by St Peter's Square, it's easy to find and well worth a visit. Angels holding garlands above the doors were commissioned from Giovan Battista de Rossi in 1746, and the rich decoration is a beauty to behold. A more recent addition is the penitentiary, constructed in 1999 with a pink marble floor and trap door to the cemetery below.

For those wondering about the 'palafrenieri' in the title, there is a papal connection. Known in English as groomers, these men were the equivalent of squires in the pope's court.

Open daily, free admission
www.pontificiaparrocchiasantanna.it/

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WRATH OF CORTÉS

How his crazed quest for gold and glory turned into the cruel slaughter of a civilisation

Written by Callum McKelvie

The shadow of Hernán Cortés looms long and large over present-day Mexico. Within a few short years of landing in the country in 1519, he and his comrades would be responsible for the destruction of the Aztec peoples and their culture. The 15th century Spanish conquistadors' brutal conquest has been described by historians such as Norman Naimark as genocide and its effects are still hotly debated, even some 500 years later. Looking into the events surrounding the Spanish invasion raises the question, what kind of a man was Cortés? Contemporary paintings and illustrations portray him very much as the typical conquistador, with his neatly trimmed beard and steely gaze. Yet history reveals him as a man with an almost uncontrollable ambition matched by an even deadlier determination. The story of Cortés' conquest of Mexico is the story of a man who would let no one and nothing stand in his way.

"Hernán Cortés was Spanish, born in 1485," author and host of *The Explorers Podcast* Matt Breen begins. "His family was of noble blood but they were poor, known as 'hidalgos'. These people were very common in Spain, there was lots of nobility but very few people with money." It's possible it was this upbringing, born into a family who were of noble blood but who had lost the riches they once had, which was the driving force behind the young man's relentless ambition. "They wanted him

EXPERT BIOS

© McKinley Breen

MATT BREEN

Matt Breen is the author and host of *The Explorers Podcast* and a self described history nerd from Madison, Wisconsin. He has a history degree from the University of Wisconsin.

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DR SARAH ALBIEZ-WIECK

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Illustrations by: Joe Cummings

to be a lawyer," Breen continues. "As a teenager he trained but it wasn't for him, so instead he took a ship and went to the New World looking for money and position." Making his way to Hispaniola in the West Indies, Cortés worked as a farmer and notary until in 1511 he seized the chance he had been looking for. Joining an expedition led by Diego Velázquez de Cuéllar, Cortés assisted in the invasion of Cuba. The word 'invasion' conjures up images of hordes of men with vast amounts of weaponry, but as Breen reminds us: "This wasn't thousands of people, it was a few hundred conquistadors trying to take the island." Nonetheless, the Spaniards were successful and Cortés' role in the conquest earned him land, power and the attention of Velázquez. In the successive years Velázquez would remain an influential presence in Cortés' life, whether the two men liked it or not...

Following the invasion of Cuba, Cortés found himself in a position of some note. He worked initially as clerk to the treasurer before later being named the Mayor of Santiago – he was still only around 30. It was at this point that Cortés and Velázquez's relationship began to sour, as the latter became increasingly afraid of the former's unchecked ambition and lust for power. Cortés gained a reputation as a charismatic individual with an appetite for women and a gift for public speaking. Velázquez recognised that the younger

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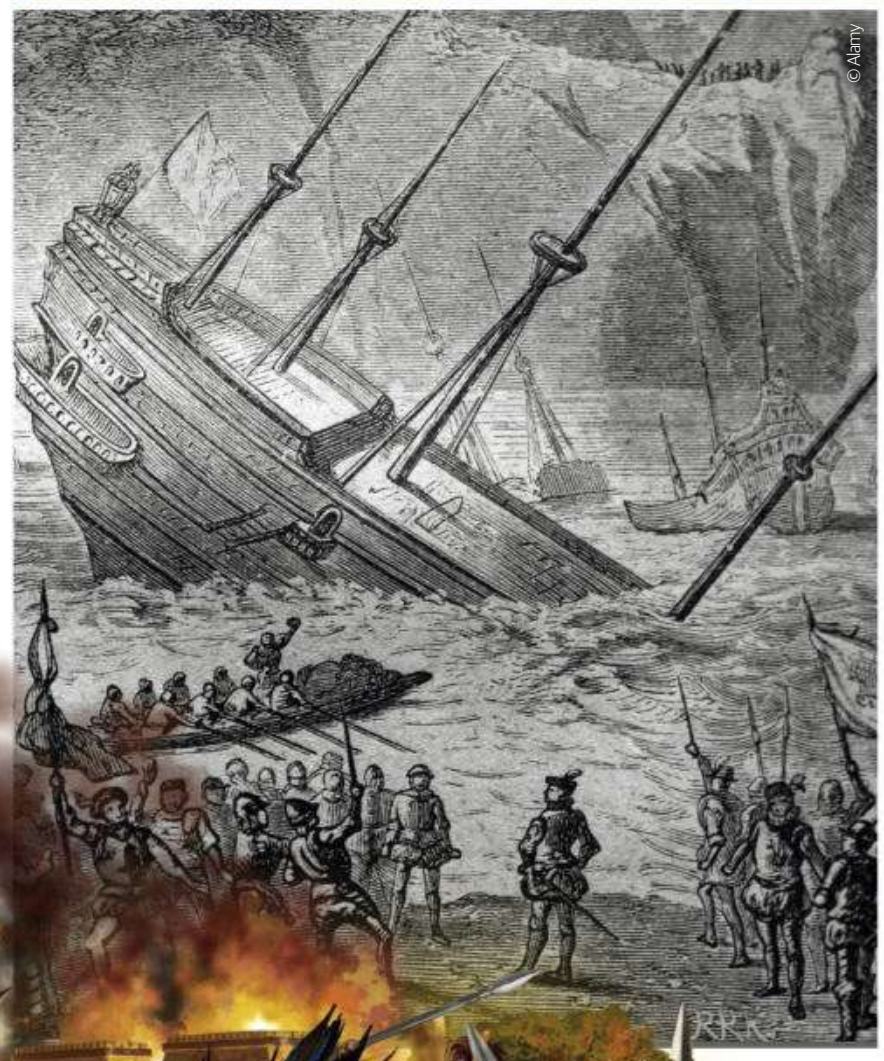
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man could be dangerous but admired his obvious skills as a leader. He also had a problem to which Cortés was a possible solution. "Velázquez wanted more action, he wasn't getting returns financially – remember these expeditions are all financial ventures," Breen explains. This factor in the motivation of the Spanish conquests cannot be understated. Their love for gold during this period seems to have been all-consuming and they would let nothing get in their way. Indeed, once in Mexico Cortés is reputed to have said: "I and my companions suffer from a sickness of the heart that can only be cured with gold." So despite the relatively recent conquest of Cuba, Velázquez was not prepared to stop there and sought to put the younger man's abilities to the test. "He ordered Cortés to organise an expedition to Mexico," Breen continues. "Cortés attracted a lot of people and Velázquez started to get nervous about this, it was like Cortés was creating a personal army. So at the last minute Velázquez rescinded his orders. Cortés wasn't prepared to stop, however, and disobeyed the command, put everyone on the ships and headed off." Needless

LEFT
Montezuma was wary of Cortés, and with good reason

FAR-LEFT
Cortés and his men entering Tenochtitlan

FAR-LEFT-INSET
Cortés watching the sinking of his fleet

to say, Velázquez was infuriated. "The expeditions were controlled by Velázquez and this is very important," Breen says. "You can't just say: 'I'm gonna get a couple of hundred guys and go stomping around trying to find gold.' You have to have charters from the Spanish crown." Velázquez was now becoming painfully aware that Cortés was a man who would let nothing stand in his way.

"They were talking about Montezuma and Tenochtitlan, so Cortés wanted to move up the coast of Mexico and inland."

Montezuma was the emperor of the Mexicah Empire (also commonly referred to as the Aztecs) and very quickly became aware of Cortés' presence in Mexico. "Montezuma was, I think to a degree, afraid," Breen suggests. "Some people say that there was a prophecy

"I AND MY COMPANIONS SUFFER FROM A SICKNESS OF THE HEART THAT CAN ONLY BE CURED WITH GOLD"

Cortés arrived in Mexico in February 1519 with 11 ships, 508 soldiers and roughly 100 sailors – not to mention war horses and dogs, cannons and various other weapons. The first few months of the expedition were spent traversing and exploring the coastal area, getting into several skirmishes with indigenous tribes. By July, Cortés' attention has been drawn to a fabulous city lying further inland. "One of the first things he heard of is this amazing place to the west," Breen reveals.

that the god Quetzalcoatl will return as a bearded man from the east and conquer Tenochtitlan, the Mexicah capital, and that Montezuma believed this. Some of this is due to the fancy of western writers of the time, making indigenous peoples look superstitious and simple next to sophisticated westerners." It's more than likely that Montezuma's concerns came from what he did know about Cortés. "They had never seen a war horse, war dogs or Spanish steel," Breen continues.

MONTEZUMA AND THE MEXICAH

Exploring the Central American empire at the time of Cortés' conquest

So who was Montezuma, the ruler of the Aztec Empire? In order to fully assess Cortés' impact it's important to briefly look at the world of the Aztecs at this point, or more correctly, the Mexicah. Dr Sarah Albiez-Wieck explains: "Aztecs is a somewhat anachronistic term with regard to this group, influenced by the Jesuit scholar Clavijero (though I am completely aware that it is the one widely used in Europe and the US). The name used by themselves and still very much in use in Mexico is Mexicah (the 'h' marks the plural in Nahuatl and represents a glottal sound). There we can see the clear relationship to the name of Mexico." The Mexicah Empire began in 1428 under the leadership of Itzcoatl, who formed an alliance with the Texocans and Tacubans to defeat the Tepanec. Thus the fledgling empire was incredibly diverse with a number of cultural, sociological and religious differences between the numerous peoples within it. Itzcoatl's successor, Montezuma, took the throne in 1440 and would be remembered as the father of the empire. At its height, Montezuma controlled some 500 small states and five to six million people. When the conquistadors landed, Montezuma soon became aware of their presence and listened to reports about them with interest.

"Fifteen or 20 war horses could take out thousands of men and it was terrifying but I don't think anything caused more damage than Spanish steel. The indigenous peoples never had swords like that, or shields or helmets. So when you have guys running up with bows and arrows but the conquistadors throw up their shields, it just doesn't do a thing."

Yet Cortés was still far away from Tenochtitlan, with his forces concentrated at the coast. In perhaps one of his most famous and well-documented moves, he dealt swiftly with a growing feeling of dissent among his men, who weren't pleased to learn of the proposed plan to march inland. Placing all treasure captured so far on his best ship, Cortés wrote a letter directed to King Charles I of Spain explaining his actions and his intention to continue the invasion. Upon hearing of this, many of the men were furious. They had believed this was a brief expedition and wished to return to Cuba. A small group of rebels formed and began to stockpile supplies. Their plan was simple: they would steal one of the smaller boats and slip away silently during the night. They would then rendezvous with the ship carrying the treasure, capture it and take the loot for themselves. Yet, somehow, the seemingly omnipresent Cortés learned of their plans, imprisoning the men and executing their leader by hanging. However, Cortes was shrewd enough to be aware that he could not make this foiled plot too widely known, as it might have encouraged others. Nor could he fully make an example of them and risk becoming unpopular. His move was simple, he instructed several of his

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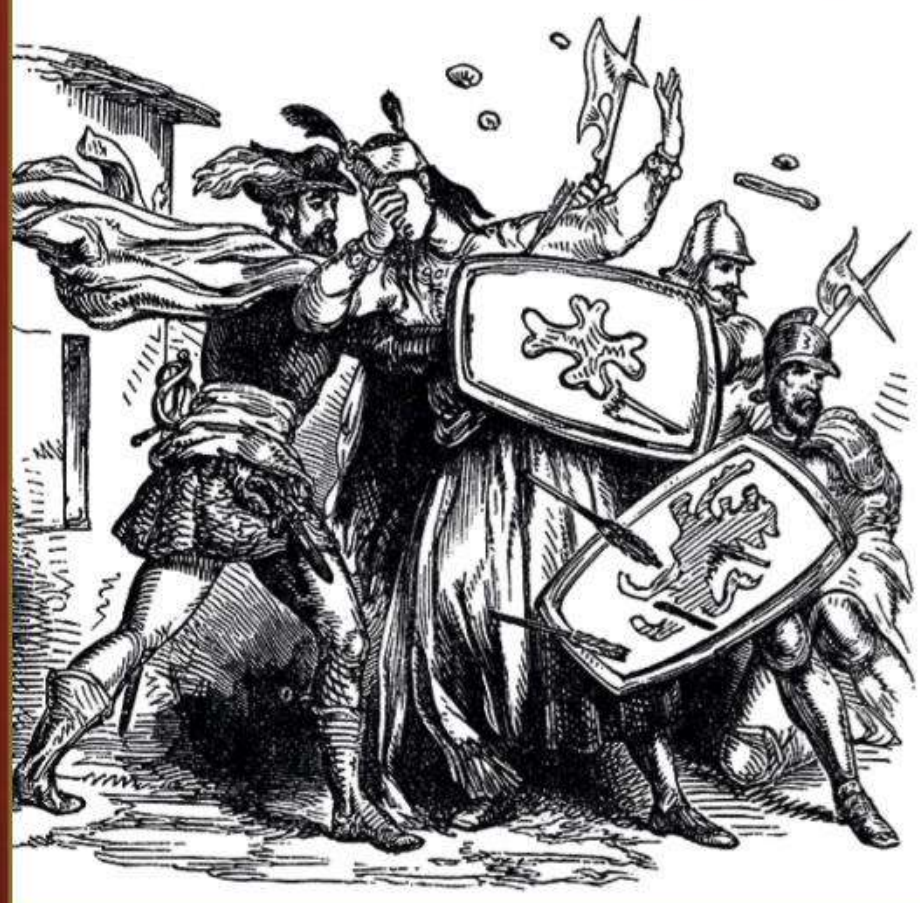
ABOVE
A 17th century depiction of the conquest of Tenochtitlan

LEFT
The Last day of Tenochtitlan by William de Leftwich Dodge

FAR-LEFT
Montezuma's capitulation upset his people



closest comrades to secretly drill holes in the bottom of the boats. The next day the men were informed that worms had eaten through the hulls and they were no longer seaworthy. Whether they liked it or not, they were here to stay and they were going to Tenochtitlan.

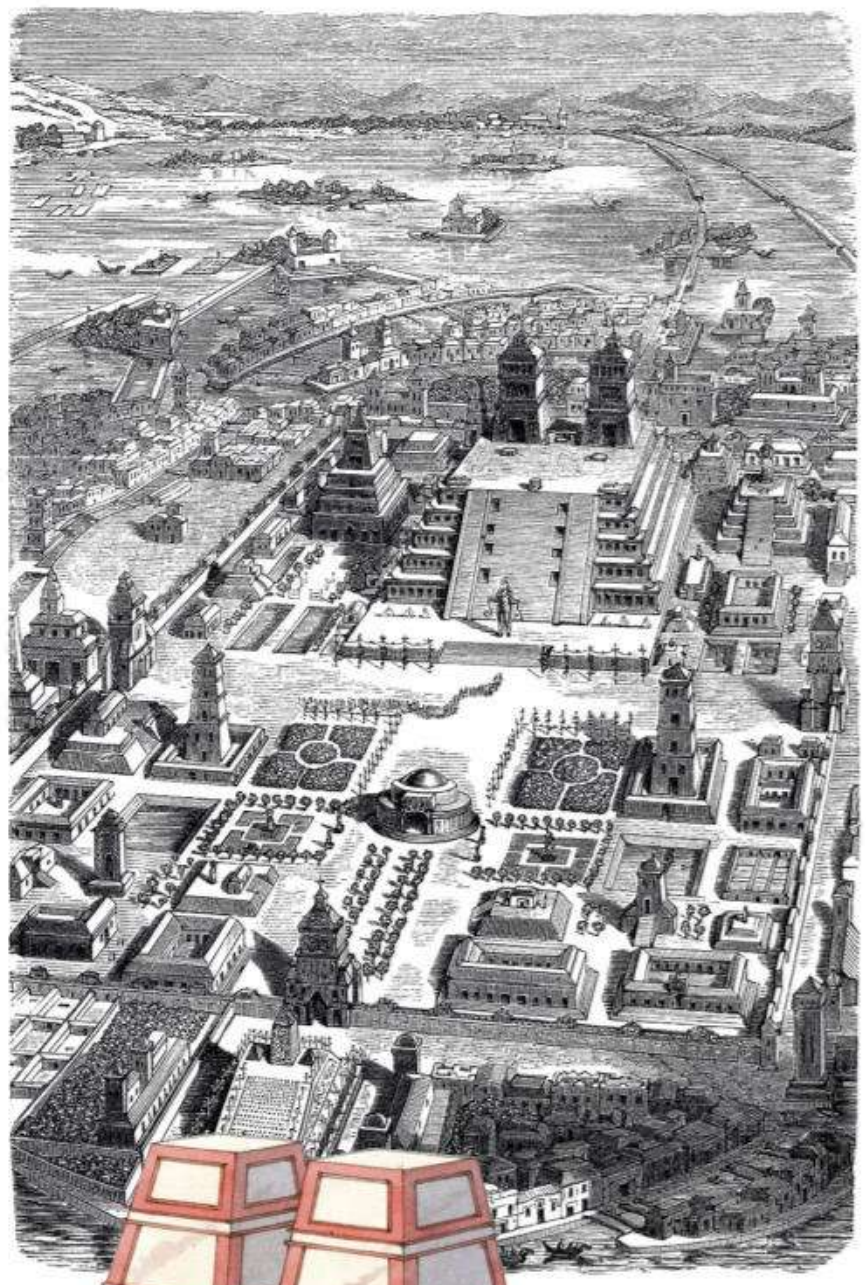
Marching into the jungle they encountered numerous indigenous tribes, such as the Tlaxcala, whom Cortés was able to partner with – the Tlaxcala would prove to be a helpful ally in the conflicts to come. They told him of the wondrous city, Tenochtitlan, but even he could not have prepared himself the sight that greeted him. In one of his many letters, Cortés took great trouble to describe everything from the layout and construction of the city to vivid descriptions of the markets, food and jewellery. "There is one square," Cortés begins, "twice as large as the city of Salamanca, surrounded by porticoes, where are daily assembled more than 60,000 souls, engaged in buying and selling; and where are found all kinds of merchandise that the world affords, embracing the necessities of life, as for instances articles of food, as well as the jewels of gold and silver, lead, brass, copper, tin, precious stones, bones, shells, snails and feathers."

Clearly, it was the riches of Tenochtitlan that excited Cortés the most and it was through these that Montezuma sought to keep the Spanish at bay. "He tried to be nice to the Spanish, he gave them gifts, gave them gold – which is what they desired the most," Breen explains. "He put them in a huge palace and let them stay there as his guests, but with every step the Spanish got even more greedy. They saw the gold and the gems and they just wanted more and more." According to Breen, Montezuma's plan was simple: he

"FIFTEEN OR 20 WAR HORSES COULD TAKE OUT THOUSANDS OF MEN BUT I DON'T THINK ANYTHING CAUSED MORE DAMAGE THAN SPANISH STEEL"

would give the Spanish what they wanted in order to make them go away. However, Cortés' next move would drastically change the relationship between not only the two leaders, but the two peoples too.

"It may seem like a big leap and we don't have any specifics in regard to why or when this occurred, but Cortés and his men took Montezuma prisoner," says Breen. Somehow seizing the emperor, Cortés then used him as leverage in order to obtain further riches and control over the city. It's important not to understate how drastic a move this was. After all, Montezuma was not only the emperor of his people, to them he was also much more. "Montezuma is a god to his people and so this was something that no one thought was possible," says Breen. "I don't think even Montezuma thought they would go this far. Cortés held him to ransom and he's sent gold and silver in return for keeping Montezuma safe." The relationship continued in this uneasy



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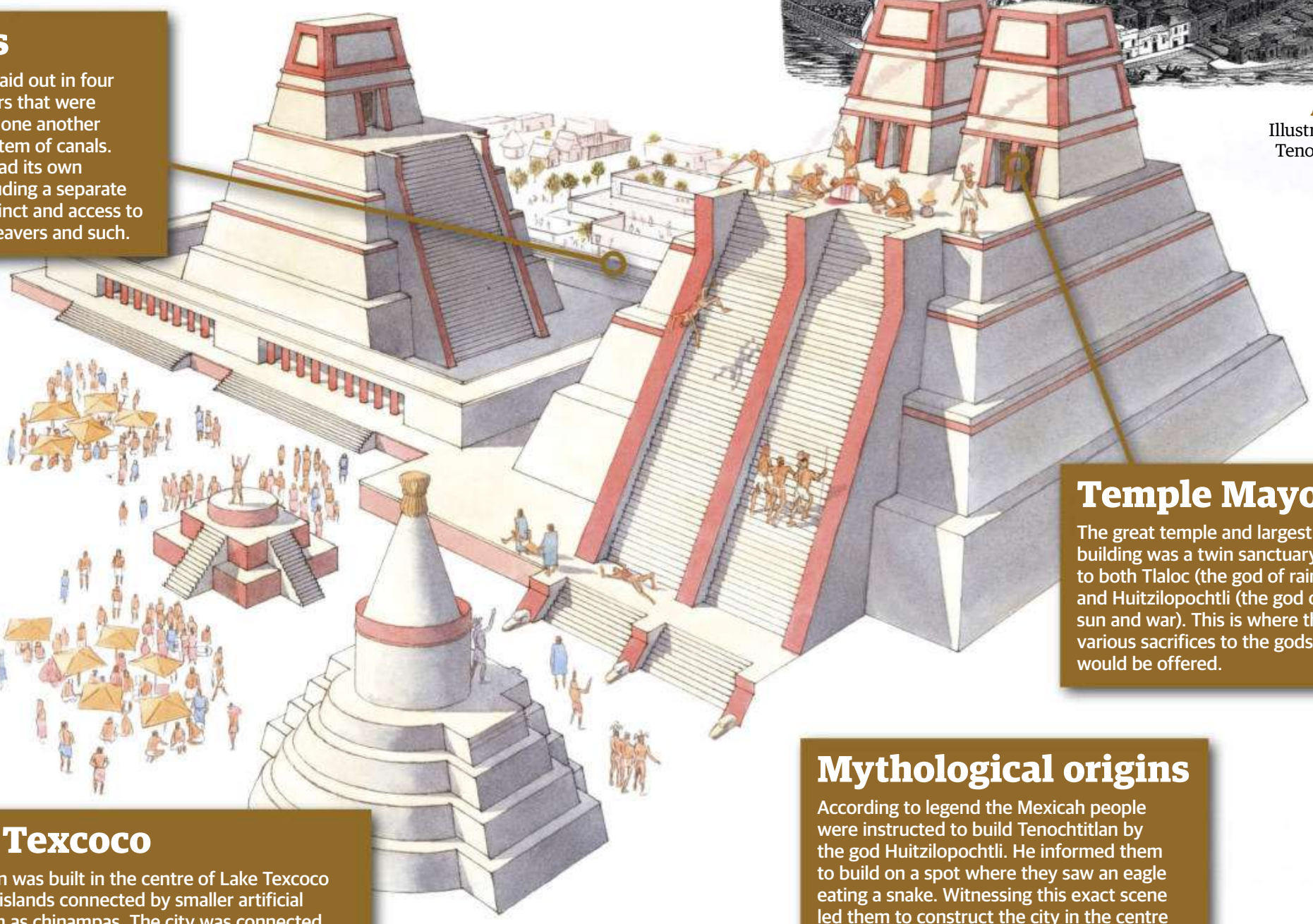
ABOVE
Illustration of Tenochtitlan

TENOCHTITLAN
Inside the lost city of the Mexicah



Canals
The city was laid out in four distinct sectors that were connected to one another through a system of canals. Each sector had its own services, including a separate religious precinct and access to craftsmen, weavers and such.

Temple Mayor
The great temple and largest building was a twin sanctuary to both Tlaloc (the god of rain) and Huitzilopochtli (the god of sun and war). This is where the various sacrifices to the gods would be offered.

Mythological origins
According to legend the Mexicah people were instructed to build Tenochtitlan by the god Huitzilopochtli. He informed them to build on a spot where they saw an eagle eating a snake. Witnessing this exact scene led them to construct the city in the centre of Lake Texcoco.

Lake Texcoco
Tenochtitlan was built in the centre of Lake Texcoco across two islands connected by smaller artificial ones known as chinampas. The city was connected to the mainland via a series of causeways and would eventually cover an area of 13km^2.

BELOW
Cortés' legacy in the region can still be felt to this day

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manner for some time, but back in Cuba Velázquez was not prepared to let Cortés' deeds go unpunished. The conquistador's past was about to catch up with him.

As a result of Cortés sailing without authority and hearing of his actions in Mexico, Velázquez dispatched a second expedition, headed by Pánfilo de Narváez. Like Cortés, Narváez had also been with Velázquez during the conquest of Cuba, commanding a company of archers, and it's likely the two men knew each other. Following the Cuban conquest, Narváez was similarly rewarded with land and a position of high office. Now he was instructed to find and capture Cortés and replace him as head of the expedition. Narváez left with a company of 900 men in March of 1520 and set sail for Mexico. Word soon reached Cortés, who stated in a later letter to the king that: "As I perceived the great mischief that was about to result from this matter, and as the country had risen in support of Narváez, it appeared to me, that by going myself where he was, I should be able to quell the movement." Cortés attempted to open discussions with

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"CORTÉS STANDS FOR A VIOLENT CONQUEST AND THE BEGINNING OF CENTURIES OF COLONIALISM THAT STILL SHAPES THE INEQUALITIES IN MEXICO TODAY"

Narváez and convince him to join him, but all his letters were ignored. Perhaps Narváez assumed Cortés would have no choice but to surrender, yet once again Cortés proved himself a man without limits. What the rebel conquistador chose to do next must have not only surprised his would-be capturer but infuriated Velázquez even further. "He started by sending some men into Narváez's camp to spread discontent and bribe the officers into taking Cortés' side, undermining Narváez's command," Breen explains. "He then launched a night attack on the camp and totally surprised them. There was a small number of deaths, but mostly on Narváez's side. Cortés now had a thousand new men, who joined up after seeing the treasure and the gold."

However, things were about to get a great deal more complicated for the wily old conquistador. While Cortés marched through the jungle to deal with Narváez's expedition he left a small group of men in Tenochtitlan, commanded by Pedro de Alvarado. Whereas Cortés had managed to mostly keep the peace, Alvarado had a distinct lack of diplomatic skill and a bloodthirsty streak that rivalled even that of his superior. Tensions began to rise and it didn't take long before they erupted violently. "The Aztecs had been given permission to celebrate a big spring festival," says Breen, setting the scene. "At the great temple, there was a huge courtyard where thousands of people gathered. These were the elite of Aztec society, noblemen and noblewomen, priests, children, none of whom are armed. The Spanish locked the doors and slaughtered them."

Like much of Cortés' and the Spanish conquistadors' history, the reasoning behind this is hotly contested, with both sides presenting alternative viewpoints. "Alvarado stated that the Aztecs were plotting rebellion," Breen continues. "But the Aztecs said that the Spanish attacked when they saw the gems and jewellery being worn." Whatever the catalyst for the slaughter, the results were horrific, with thousands killed. When Cortés returned he found the Mexicah furious but unable to organise proper retaliation because so many of their elite had been massacred in the bloodbath.

TOP
Despite his action Cortés is sometimes depicted as a romantic hero

ABOVE
Cortés opposed human sacrifice, but had no qualms about slaughtering those who opposed him

Cortés was now in a very difficult situation. He had defeated Narváez but unless he could succeed in his conquest of Mexico and the subjugation of its people, then his treachery would not go unpunished. After all, he could not return to Cuba, for Velázquez would surely seek revenge. Initially, he instructed Montezuma to speak to his people and attempt to quell their discontent. Yet the ruler had been humiliated and was seen as nothing more than a puppet for the Spanish conquistadors. For several days the emperor stood and spoke to the Mexicah, but he was pelted with rocks and stones by people too enraged to listen to him. He died a few days later, either from

his wounds (as claimed by the Spanish) or from execution after failing to calm the populous (as stated by the Mexicah). The situation was slowly but surely getting out of control and soon Cortés would have no option but to flee the great city.

'La Noche Triste' or 'Night of Sorrows' would be the first major Mexicah victory against the conquistadors, as the Spanish attempted to escape the growing tension in Tenochtitlan. The Mexicah capital was situated in the centre of Lake Texcoco and was only accessible by a series of narrow causeways. Cortés became increasingly concerned that these routes would be blocked, stating in a letter: "Seeing the dangerous situation in which we were now placed, and the very serious injury that the Indians were doing us every day; and fearing that they would also destroy the remaining causeway, as they had done the others, and when that was effected death would be our inevitable fate; and moreover, having been often entreated by all my companions to abandon the place, the greater part of whom were so badly wounded as to be disabled from fighting, I determined to quit the city that night."

But Cortés' ambition, determination and greed saw that he would not abandon the city easily, despite the pleas of his companions. Waiting as long as he did meant that the Mexicah were expecting his attempt to flee. Weighed down with gold and heavy jewellery, the conquistadors, packed onto the narrow causeway, were vulnerable.

The escape began when several of Cortés' men killed the few night watchmen stationed on the causeway. However, when their cries were heard, hordes of Mexicah warriors jumped into boats and began to attack. Trapped on the narrow pathway, the once powerful and terrifying war horses proved useless and an easy target. Cortés' own description of the battle, and his part in it, paints a vivid picture: "I sailed across with great speed, followed by five horsemen and 100 foot [soldiers], with whom I passed all the (broken) bridges swimming, and reached the mainland. Leaving the people who formed this advanced party, I returned to the rear, where I found troops hotly engaged. It is incalculable how much our people suffered, as well Spaniards as our Indian allies of Tascaltecal [Tlaxcala], nearly all of whom perished, together with many native Spaniards and horses, besides the loss of all the gold, jewels, cotton cloth, and many other things we had brought away, including the artillery." Cortés later estimated that a total of 45 horses, 150 Spaniards and about 2,000 indigenous allies were lost during the battle.

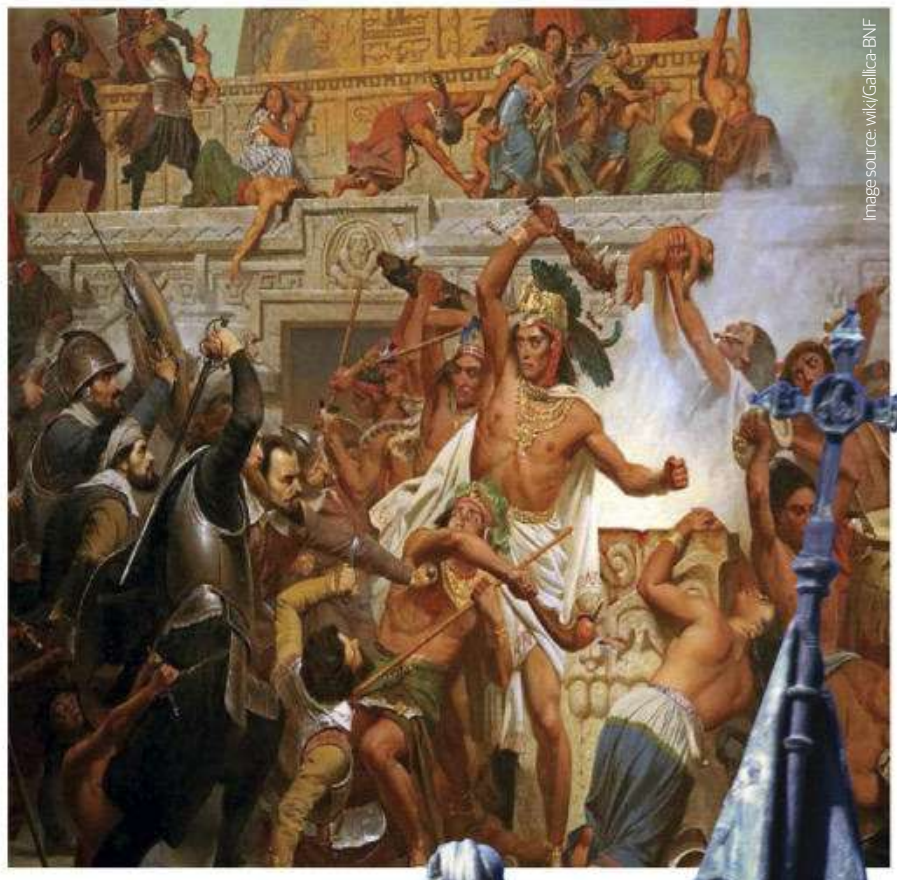
Image source: wiki/Gallica BNF

ABOVE
The capture of Montezuma

BELOW
A monument to Cortés in Medellin, Spain

This cataclysmic defeat could very well have been the end of Cortés. His army was defeated and demoralised, his equipment lost, not to mention the slain horses and men. Of course, as should be apparent by now, the conquistador was not the kind of man to give up. Instead of cutting his losses he resolved to take the city once and for all.

Yet it was a series of other factors that ultimately assisted in the fall of Tenochtitlan. Firstly, Cortés was able to regroup, with a number of indigenous peoples adding some 50,000 warriors to his forces. Secondly, the Mexicah had been severely hampered by an outbreak of smallpox, which had been brought to Mexico by the conquistadors. "This is something that happened almost everywhere in the New World," explains Breen. "Disease was on Cortés' side. Smallpox had arrived with the Spanish and now, a couple of years later, in 1521, it was going through the Mexicah population like wildfire. This was an incredibly complex empire and what you ended up with was a lot of very vulnerable areas who were no longer that impressed by the empire. When Cortés marched in and offered an allegiance, they sided with him. Cortés used political and cultural tensions to convert people to his side."

Cortés began by capturing the causeways and besieging the city. In May 1521, the conquistadors were able to take control of the Chapultepec aqueduct, cutting off all of Tenochtitlan's fresh water supplies. Many of the Mexicah were already succumbing to starvation or dying of thirst and this made their situation even more desperate. "They fought bitterly to the end," says Breen. "There were some very difficult moments for the Spanish. Cortés was almost killed a couple of times and he was badly injured." At one point in July, the Mexicah were even able to take Cortés prisoner for a short period, wounding his leg and using his capture to regain lost land.

Despite fighting hard, however, they were unable to stop the inevitable. "At the end of the siege the city was in ruins," Breen continues. "The Spanish burned whatever they captured to the ground to stop the Aztecs retaking buildings and using them to their advantage."

The subsequent destruction of the Mexicah was brutal and ruthless, and it is for this that Cortés is remembered. "What was most targeted was the religion: objects considered 'idolatrous' or 'heretic' were widely destroyed," explains Dr Sarah

DID CORTÉS MURDER HIS WIFE?

The continuing mystery of Catalina Suarez

Hernán Cortés' first wife, Catalina Suarez, is often forgotten when discussing the conquistador. Cortés married her due to pressure from Diego Velázquez, and so when she arrived in New Spain after his conquest he was less than pleased. Perhaps even more so as he had become involved with an indigenous woman named Malinche. After a banquet during which husband and wife argued about Cortés' mistress, Catalina is said to have been found dead in her bedroom. Exactly what killed her is unknown and today her death is still mysterious, though she suffered from poor health and struggled with asthma.

Many believe, however, that her death had a much more sinister cause and that Cortés had poisoned her during the banquet. He made sure to have her buried quickly and in relative secrecy, arousing suspicion among many in attendance. The conquistador's brutal nature and unchecked ambition caused few to doubt that he was capable of doing such a thing.

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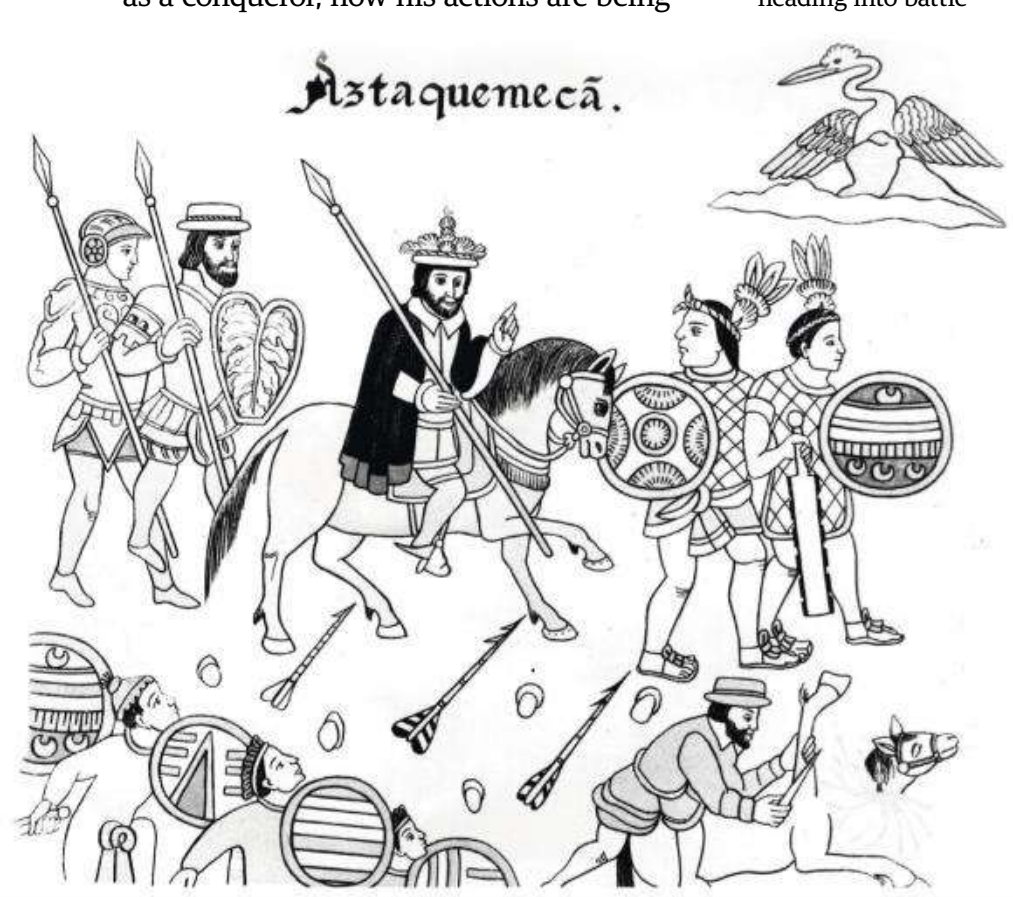
RIGHT
Cortés became involved with an indigenous woman

Albiez-Wieck of the University of Cologne, whose research covers Latin-American history during this period. "Churches [were] built on the ruins of temples, as in the case of the cathedral in Mexico City, which was built using stones from the central temple in Tenochtitlan and built next to its ruins. There have been a lot of excavations going on in what is today called 'Templo Mayor'. Entire 'libraries' of codices were burnt and not a single one from the Basin of Mexico survives."

While previously Cortés was idealised as a conqueror, now his actions are being reassessed. "It's really difficult to think of any positive legacy Cortés left behind," says Dr Albiez-Wieck. "He stands for a violent conquest and the beginning of centuries of colonialism, which shapes the inequalities in Mexico today. If I would have to name something, I would maybe name the fact that he was the father of one of the first mestizos, Martín Cortés [whom] he had with his lover Malintzin/Malinche. However, here again we can see a lot of inequalities: Hernán Cortés never married Malintzin but wed her off to one of his fellow conquerors. But mestizaje [the mixing together of different races and cultures in Latin America] became one of the central elements of Mexican national identity. This happened much later, in the 19th and 20th century, with José Vasconcelos' essay *The Cosmic Race* from 1925 being a decisive element. Still, these ideas of mestizaje contain many racist elements."

BELOW
A contemporary image of Cortés heading into battle



"THE STORY OF CORTÉS' CONQUEST OF MEXICO IS THE STORY OF A MAN WHO WOULD LET NO-ONE AND NOTHING GET IN HIS WAY"

While Cortés can be seen as someone who shaped the modern world, he was clearly motivated by personal ambition and greed. He frequently put the lives of his own men at risk, ignoring their concerns and lying to them to obtain his own desire. He ignored the wishes of his superiors and his ruthlessness led to thousands of deaths.

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ABOVE Thanks to the advent of photography in the Victorian era it was common for grieving families to pose for a picture with a deceased loved-one

MEMENTO MORI

Inside the disturbing world of Victorian post-mortem photography

Written by Callum McKelvie

While many things in life are unknown, an unfortunate certainty is its inevitable end. Throughout history, different cultures and societies have had their own unique approaches to this grim subject. The Ancient Egyptians, for example, had complex burial rituals, while during the medieval period religious thought, preoccupied with visions of heaven and hell, dominated much of western Europe. But perhaps one of the most interesting and peculiar cultures through which to examine our relationship with death is that of the Victorians. They were obsessed with the spirit world, ghosts and funeral culture. One of the most bizarre ways they demonstrated this was through the new art of post-mortem photography, which is literally what it sounds like: a photograph taken of someone after they've died. These photographs were a sensation in the latter half of the 19th century in Europe, the USA and Great Britain.

For context, however, it's first important to delve a little deeper into the Victorian attitude towards death and explore some of their customs surrounding funerals. In the 19th century, in both Great Britain and the USA, death was a highly ritualised event, especially for the woman of the household. After the death of her husband, a widow was expected to be in 'deep mourning' for a year and then spend a second in 'half mourning'. This strict rule meant that she was be expected to wear only black, which represented her grief and sadness. Of course, she wasn't allowed to wear just any old kind of black: the dresses were often made of crepe or non-reflective silk and adorned with very little jewellery. Perhaps most distressingly, during the first year a widow was expected to be in strict isolation and could not receive visitors to the home or attend public events, except church. During half mourning, visitors were allowed and the widow could wear some trim on her black attire. Such was the familiarity of death to the Victorian woman that they would often make their own shroud, including them in the wedding dowry.

How exactly does this concern photographing dead people? Photography was at this time a new and exciting medium, and offered a permanent memento of an individual. This was the period in which people wore lockets and made jewellery or even wreaths from the hair of a dead loved one. As a result, mementos were highly sought-after and photography was a new way to obtain one. Indeed, some sources estimate that photographers were more ▶

MAIN IMAGE
Post-mortem photograph of Victor Hugo, the author of *Les Miserables*

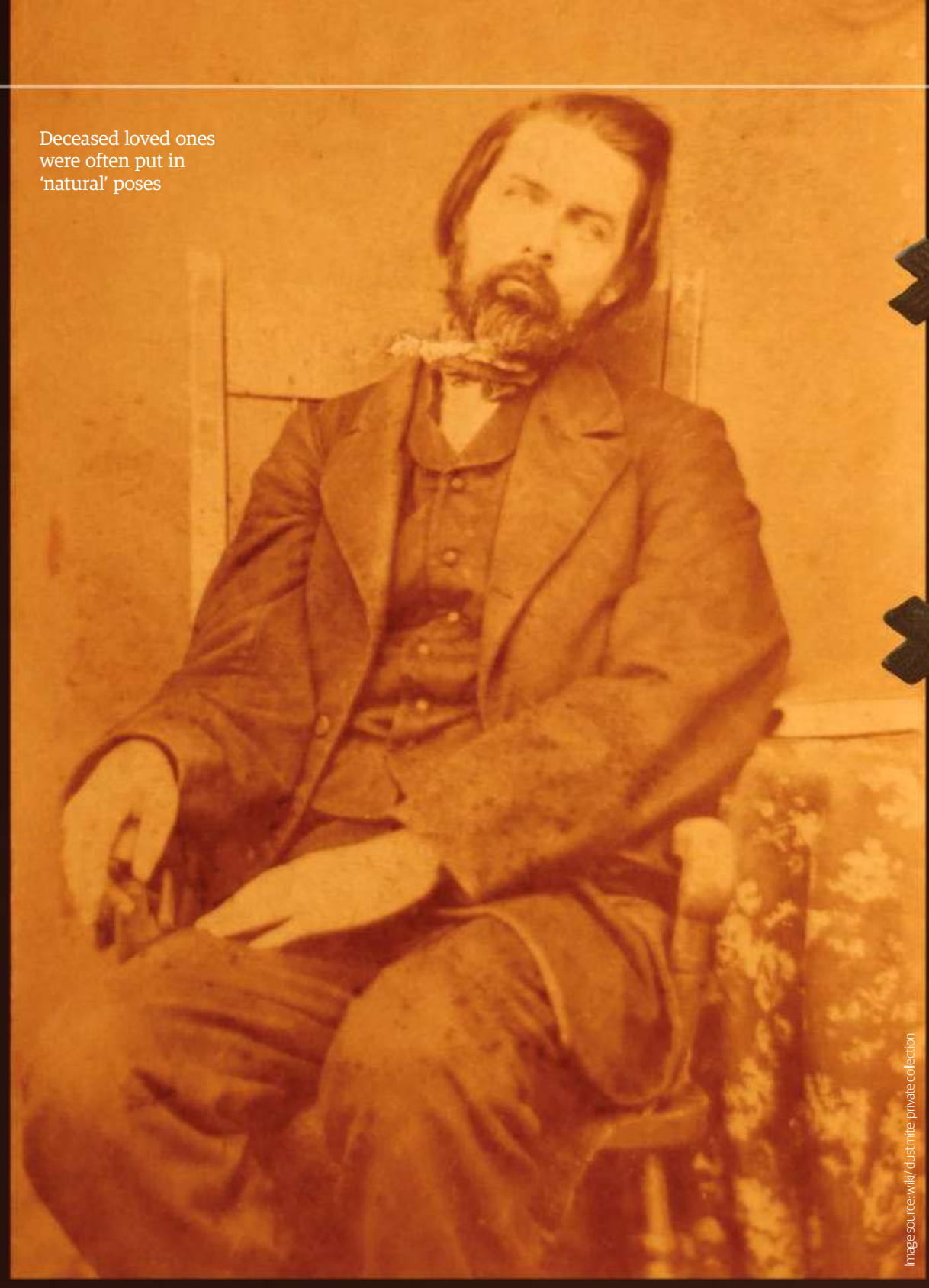
Image source: wiki/ Nadar, MOPA

likely to record deaths over weddings by some three to one margin. In some areas a post-mortem photography became a practice that went hand-in-hand with a funeral and images were distributed among friends and relatives.

Why was photography such a widely available and popular medium? The story of the mass-market photograph began when Louis-Jacques-Mandé Daguerre revealed the first successful photographic method, known as 'Daguerreotype', in the 1830s. This method was based on the principle of reversing an image, using a silvered copper plate, the resultant image being a combination of silver and mercury resting on this plate. These images were extremely delicate, so much so that the components could even be brushed off. In 1851, however, Frederick Scott Archer's 'Wet Collodion Process' brought a number of advantages that made the medium incredibly popular. Firstly, numerous copies could be made (unlike Daguerrotypes) and secondly the exposure time was less (meaning images could be taken outside). Perhaps most importantly, it was cheap and its success drastically lowered the price of other methods. For example, in the US in 1850 a single Daguerreotype cost only 25 cents. Grieving families who had had no opportunity to obtain an image of their loved one during their lifetime, due to the expensive nature of portraiture, now had an opportunity to do so.

In contemporary times some of these images have seen a resurgence in interest due to the morbid way in which they were composed. While the majority seem to depict the individuals in their coffins or as if they were asleep, some of the more macabre examples have the deceased posed as if they were alive. In these photos the corpse is shown sitting or being propped up by family members. On some websites this has led to games of 'spot the cadaver' as people debate over whether an image is a post-mortem photograph or just a particularly dead-eyed model.

As post-mortem photography became a regular and common practice, it's said that photographers invented new and unique ways in which to pose their 'models'. While stories abound of 'posing stands' used to prop up the dead, research suggests that these were in fact a common occurrence for living models during the period because exposure times were a lot longer.



Deceased loved ones were often put in 'natural' poses

Image source: wiki/ dustmite, private collection

"Photographers were more likely to record deaths over weddings by some three to one"

Some photos were more conventional images of a corpse in an open casket

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While the best possible care has been taken in selecting the images here, in some cases it is impossible to tell the authenticity of a post-mortem photograph.

Perhaps the most bizarre method of keeping models still was used on both the living and the dead. Given the long exposure times, taking images of young children was almost impossible due to an infant's tendency to cry, wriggle and spoil the process in every possible way. Thus an ingenious role was invented, that of the 'hidden mother'. The baby's actual mother would be disguised as either cushions or a backdrop and hold the infant. Others were far more obvious, such as using techniques to photographically remove the head of the mother. A sepia-toned image depicting a human-shaped bundle of rags holding a small child can be somewhat creepy, even more so when it's possible not every child photographed is alive. Although it's impossible to prove, a small number of examples show infants with what appears to be sunken eyes and possible stitching on their mouth. Naturally, this hidden mother method would both help to pose the dead body and also help to further give the illusion of life due to the sheer number of hidden mother photographs already in circulation.

In Poland the trend for death photography was particularly prevalent, and it was the work of Karol Beyer that garnered

Image source: wiki/Cyfrowa Biblioteka Narodowa

the most attention. Here, however, post-mortem photography took on a distinctly political role, curiously helping to unify the nation against a greater enemy. In the 1860s Polish anti-tsarist sentiment had begun to grow and would lead to the so-called 'January Uprising' that would begin in 1863 and last until mid-1864. Prior to this event, a protest against the tsar took place in Warsaw in 1861, and on 25 February, as a misguided and viscous means of quelling discontent, the army was given orders to shoot five of the participants. Beyer rushed to photograph the bodies and arranged them in a distinct tableaux, distributing cards of the work across Poland. The result was an incredibly distinctive image that helped create a record of the actions of the Russian military but far more importantly helped unify and consolidate national sentiment against the tsar and in favour of this growing national movement against Russia.

As this suggests, in some cases these photos weren't even of loved ones and were sold en masse. Victor Hugo, the author of *Les Miserables* and *The Hunchback of Notre Dame,* was one of the celebrities who had photos of his body printed on cards and sold to enthusiastic punters. But Hugo wasn't alone in being immortalised in such a manner and is in illustrious company, including fellow novelist Marcel Proust and painter Gustave Dore. The former was a particularly late example, taken in 1922. Certainly not part of the Victorian trend, this photograph was taken by famed French photographic artist 'Man Ray', whose expertise was usually in creating abstract photographs. Through exposing objects to light and using the negative image he created what were called 'Photograms' or 'Rayographs'. The photo of Proust was an altogether different matter and taken at the urging of Ray's friend Jean Cocteau. Commentating on the photo of Proust, Cocteau stated: "Those who have seen this profile of calm, of order, of plenitude, will never forget the spectacle of an unbelievable recording device come to a stop, becoming an art object: a masterpiece of repose next to a heap of notebooks where our friend's genius continues to live on like the wristwatch of a dead soldier."

From a contemporary perspective, one of the most shocking things about post-mortem photography is how many depict children. Throughout the 19th century, the infant mortality rate was distressingly high. As Patricia Jalland points out in her book *Death In The Victorian Family*, in 1840 the number of deaths per 1,000 births was an average of 154, 148 in 1860, 153 in 1880, and 154 in 1900. This totalled some 100,000 infants dying every year before reaching their first birthday, the causes often being bronchitis, diarrhoea, pneumonia and a variety of other diseases. As Sarah Seaton, author of *Childhood & Death In Victorian England*, notes: "To a 21st century person there are lots of visual mementos (if one is lucky) of a passed loved one. In the Victorian period, photography was still relatively new, complicated and expensive, so photographs, particularly of children, were not often taken. However, it is easy to understand why photographs were taken of deceased loved ones, whether alone or with other family members, as it may be the family's one and only chance to gain a memento of their precious child." Perhaps as a result of this, the children were often photographed either with their parents or as part of a family line up, their position dictated by their age. With younger children in particular, some sources state the eyes were painted onto the eyelids in order to better give the appearance of life.

While it's incredibly easy for a modern audience to look at the photographs shown here and shrink away in disgust or morbid horror, it is important to remember the context within which they were taken. As the Industrial Revolution turned London into an overpopulated metropolis without proper sanitary facilities, cholera outbreaks were a frequent occurrence, firstly in 1831. This was soon followed by outbreaks of influenza in 1837 and typhoid in 1838. Indeed, the Victorian period is full of epidemics that ravaged the population, including the 1889-90 flu epidemic, the recurrence of which would lead to the death of Queen Victoria's grandson Albert Victor. In fact, Victoria herself is a symbol of the nation's attitude towards death, choosing to wear black mourning attire after her husband Prince Albert's passing in 1861 until her own death in 1901. In the Victorian period, death was an everyday fact and people chose not to shy away or hide from it. Post-mortem photography should not be remembered as some horrific 'fad' but as a means for mourning families to obtain a precious memento of a lost loved one.

ABOVE Karol Beyer's 1861 photograph *Five Dead Men* – the first post-mortem photograph taken in Poland

BELOW Such images were a precious keepsake for grieving relatives

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10 FORGOTTEN AFRICAN EMPIRES

The most powerful and expansive kingdoms that have been lost to time

Written by Jonathan Gordon

Thanks to a combination of factors, the history of the continent of Africa is a relatively unexplored and underserved area of study. This is due in part to the nature of the evidence that might be available to us to analyse. Even for the relatively well-researched history of Ancient Egypt, massive gaps and question marks exist. Thanks to conquest and colonisation, much of the history of the continent has been lost. But there is still much there to learn that has simply been ignored, relegated to footnotes, or prologues to other fields of study considered to be of greater importance.

In this feature we hope to bring some of this forgotten history to the surface. It is by no means comprehensive, but it will highlight some of the most interesting and diverse episodes in the history of Africa that might not have caught your attention before. The re-evaluation of the history of Africa is a live project that is revealing more and more fascinating stories with each passing year. This is an introduction to that exploration.

© Getty Images

BELOW
Don Miguel de Castro was an envoy of Kongo sent to the Netherlands

Image source: wiki/Rama

KINGDOM OF KONGO

Tangled up in Europe
1390 – 1914

Taking its name from the Kikongo language spoken in west-central Africa, south of the Congo River, a federation of Kikongo-speaking people was formed through the marriage of Nima a Nzima, of the Mpemba Kasi, and Luqueni Luansanze, of the Mbata, in 1390. From this, a monarchy was gradually established.

The Portuguese made contact with the Kingdom of Kongo, now established with Mbanza Kongo as its capital, in 1483. In 1491, both the manikongo (king), Nzinga a Nkuwu, and his son, Mvemba a Nzinga, were baptised, taking the Christian names João I Nzinga a Nkuwu and Afonso I Mvemba a Nzinga. Thereafter, the fate of the kingdom was heavily tied to the Portuguese and Europe, such as when warriors, called the Jagas, overran the country in 1568 and the Portuguese were needed to assist in their expulsion. In return, the colony of Angola was allowed to be formed. Kongolese ambassadors were also sent to Europe to ingratiate the kingdom with foreign powers.

Ultimately, the two could not coexist peacefully forever, coming to a head at the Battle of Mbwila on 29 October 1665, where manikongo António I Nvita a Nkanga was killed in battle. From then the kingdom began to fracture, and descended into civil war for the rest of the 17th century, holding together as a looser, fractious kingdom until it was finally subsumed by Portugal in 1914.

Image source: wiki/Statens Museum for Kunst

SONGHAI EMPIRE

By land and by water 1460 – 1591

© Getty Images

The Songhai people are thought to have become established in their capital of Gao around 800 CE. They began to flourish from the 11th century until it became part of the Mali Empire from 1325, though the city was never taxed.

As the Mali Empire declined, the Songhai ascended under the leadership of Sonni Ali the Great. He used his fleet of canoes and expert cavalry to great effect, conquering the lands around the Songhai. His reputation was so great that it was rumoured he had magical powers.

After his death, one of his generals, Mohammed Ture, took power in 1493. Being a devout Muslim, his expansions of the empire took on a more religious character.

Engaging more with the Muslim world, such as the Caliph of Egypt, Mohammed Ture was made the Caliph of Sudan. Trade saw a massive improvement, and during the 16th century, the empire became rich thanks to the export of gold, nuts and slaves. However, as the century unfolded, the empire fell into civil war as drought and disease had the cumulative effect of chipping away at its riches and health. Finally, the Moroccan army invaded, looking to control the gold trade of the region.

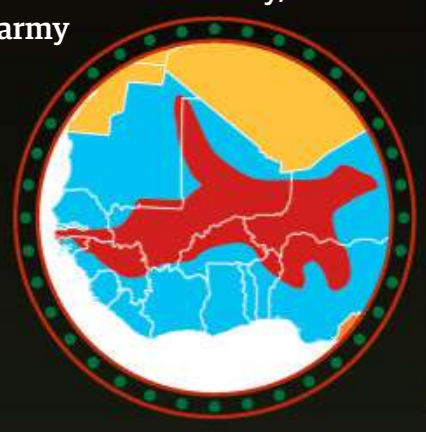


Image source: wiki Gallica Digital Library

MALI EMPIRE

A kingdom of commerce 1235 – 1670

When looking for great African empires, Mali and the great Mansa Musa are often mentioned. Credited as the richest man to have ever lived, the King of the Mali Empire had a seismic impact on the region around him, but the story of his empire started earlier.

It actually goes back to the rebellion of Sundiata Keita, sometimes known as the 'Lion King', who overthrew Susa control with the Malinké people in 1230 and set up a new independent nation in western Africa. They secured the gold-rich lands around them, and united the other Malinké communities too. Thanks to its gold (and salt) trade, it became a commercial hub for the region.

This is what Mansa Musa inherited as king in 1307, but he still managed to double the size of the empire during his reign. His cultural contribution was also significant. Mali was a Muslim nation, and Musa is said to have given away his gold on a pilgrimage to Mecca. On his way back he also founded religious learning centres and schools, creating a lasting legacy for the region.

Ultimately, the empire became overstretched. After Mansa Musa's death, infighting and poor leadership saw the empire decline until major cities like Gao and Timbuktu were lost.

Image source: wiki/Paul R Burley

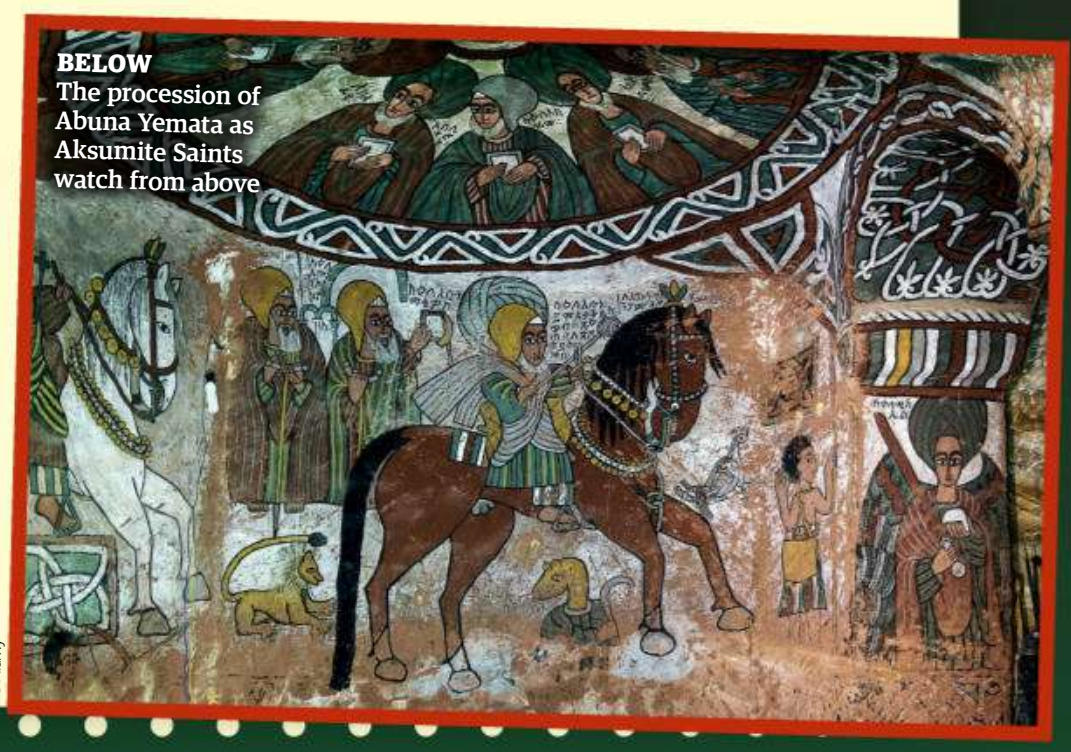
KINGDOM OF AKSUM

One of the four Great Kingdoms c.100 CE – 940 CE

"There are four great kingdoms on earth: the first is the Kingdom of Babylon and Persia; the second is the Kingdom of Rome; the third is the Kingdom of the Aksumites: the fourth is the kingdom of the Chinese." So said the Persian prophet Mani in the 3rd century CE. Located where modern Ethiopia and Eritrea now stand, the Aksumites grew rich and powerful thanks to their control of Red Sea trade, particularly in ivory and gold, and was thought to be the greatest market in the north east. It grew enough in strength to conquer the Kushites and burn the capital, Meroe, in the 4th century.

Interestingly, the kingdom converted to Christianity under King Ezana around 330 CE, making it one of the world's earliest Christian states, and meaning it was closely tied with Byzantine Egypt. Within the Ethiopian orthodox church, it is believed that the Ark of the Covenant was brought to Menelik I, son of King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba, in Aksum.

The influence of South Arabia would see the dominance of Aksum challenged in the 7th and 8th centuries. Combined with its fertile lands drying up and trading routes blocked by emerging powers in the Middle East, the kingdom gradually declined.



BELOW
The procession of Abuna Yemata as Aksumite Saints watch from above

© Alamy

Image source: wiki/Centro editor de América Latina

Image source: wiki/British Library

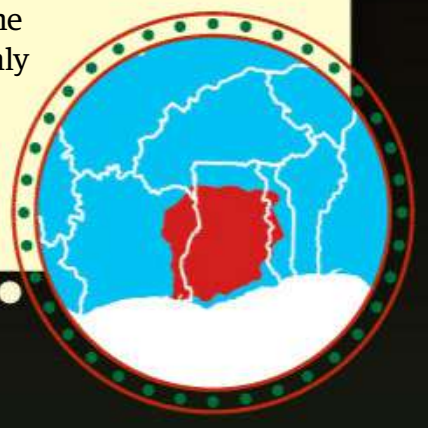
ASANTE EMPIRE

The golden kingdom 1701 – 1902

In the late 17th century, a leader called Osei Tutu emerged and led successful campaigns to unify the Asante and other Akan peoples under his rule. Named Asantehene, meaning 'paramount chief', he organised his new state by centralising the trade of the new Asante Empire's most important export, gold. The metal was so common that gold dust was used in ornaments and to decorate the clothing of all its citizens, not just the wealthy.

However, later in the 18th century, the slave trade took hold in the region, with an estimated 6,000-7,000 people a year sold into bondage from the Gold Coast. Asante was not excluded from this, and enslaved people became a massive export for the fledgling nation, often in exchange for firearms with which control and conquest of neighbours could be secured.

Britain banning the trade of enslaved people in 1807 resulted in trade disputes and further conflicts. The Asante defeated the British in 1824, but tensions flared again in 1863, ending with the occupation of the capital Kumasi in 1874 (but only for a day). The embarrassment of this defeat led to groups seceding from the empire, and ultimately the Asante were annexed into the British Gold Coast colony in 1902.



KINGDOM OF KUSH

In the shadow of Egypt 1069 BCE – 350 CE

Sitting just south of the famous civilisation in what is now the Republic of Sudan, the history of the Kushites is dominated by their relationship with Ancient Egypt. However, as Egyptian power declined in the 11th century BCE, an independent monarchy was established. Thanks to gold and emerald mines, as well as the kingdom's location on the trade routes from Egypt to the Red Sea, and from the Nile to the south and west, it grew in wealth and influence.

Eventually, the Kingdom of Kush would begin to invade Egypt, starting with the reign of Kashta, and then his son Piye, who conquered the entire country right up to the coast of the Mediterranean. The Kushite kings became the pharaohs of the 25th dynasty, lasting a century. Yet, the Kushites remained distinct, with their own hieroglyphs, language and culture. They did, however, share the funerary custom of burying kings in pyramids, and shared some of the same gods.

Ultimately, the rising Assyrian influence in the region caused ongoing conflict between the two, and eventually the Kushites were expelled from Egypt in 656 BCE by Psamtik, who established the last native dynasty of Egypt. The Kingdom of Kush lasted for another 700 years until it was conquered by the Kingdom of Aksum in 350 CE.

BELOW The Kushite Pyramids were inspired by those of the Egyptians

Image source: wiki/Voyage a Meroe

Image source: wiki/Le Livre de Marco Polo

ABOVE
Emperor Yagbe'u Seyon battles the Sultan of Ada

ETHIOPIAN EMPIRE

The endless kingdom c.1270 – 1769

From the Aksumite Empire to the overthrow of Haile Selassie, you could almost draw one unbroken line for the history of Ethiopia, sometimes also referred to as Abyssinia. What we're interested in is the Solomonic dynasty started by Yekuno Amlak that succeeded the brief Zagwe dynasty and claimed to reestablish its lineage to King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba.

Trade along the Blue Nile was this nation's main source of income, though it also competed for access to the Red Sea with surrounding Muslim peoples. Under the leadership of Amda Seyon I from 1314 to 1344, the empire doubled in size, conquering communities to the south and east and establishing heavy taxes on the export of gold, ivory and enslaved people.

Conflict arose again in the mid-16th century with the rise of the Adal Sultanate. However, greater European interest in the Red Sea saw aid arrive from Portugal as 400 musketeers arrived to train Ethiopian troops, and their subsequent hit-and-run tactics managed to break the Muslim army.

Near its end, the Ethiopian Empire enjoyed something of a cultural renaissance under the leadership of Empress Mentewab, who co-ruled with her son and then grandson. However, growing regional divisions saw the kingdom collapse in 1769 and enter an era of feudalism.

Image source: wiki/Image original

MUTAPA EMPIRE

Lord of plundered lands c.1430 – 1760

The Mutapa Empire is an interesting example of a kingdom that seems to have essentially migrated to achieve success. Originating as the Kingdom of Zimbabwe, it's understood that food shortages forced the warrior prince, Nyatsimba Mutota, to seek out salt and other resources to help his people. Identifying and conquering a portion of the Zambezi River Valley, he set up a new Empire of Mutapa some 300km to the north of his original home.

We're somewhat reliant on the accounts of European travellers through the region for the details of how this new kingdom operated, but it's understood that Mutota ruled with a light touch, and that it was his son, Mwene Matope, who ultimately expanded the empire to include the entire Zambezi River Valley, as well as what is now Angola, Zambia, Zimbabwe and part of Mozambique, all the way to the Indian Ocean. Matope took the title mwenemutapa, meaning 'lord of the plundered lands'.

From this vast expanse he levied taxes as well as establishing trade, most likely including goods from India and China, which would have been very lucrative. However, the empire began to decline after his reign in the mid-1500s, thanks in part to the growing interest of Portugal, which deposed the king in 1629 and imposed their own ruler.

ALMOHAD CALIPHATE

Cross-continental empire
1121 – 1269

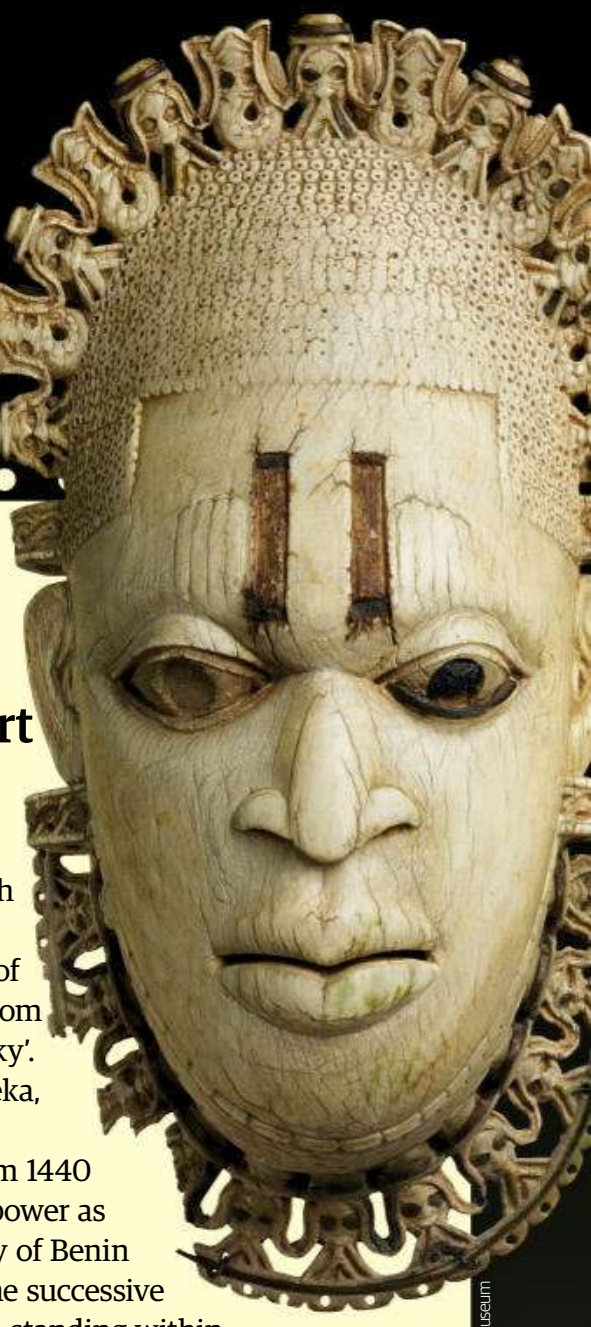
This Berber confederation looked to challenge a number of standing powers when it emerged in 1121 under the leadership of Ibn Tumart. A religious teacher, he sought the moral reform of the ruling Almoravids, who controlled much of North Africa, as well as Islamic Spain. Supported by some of the most powerful Berber tribes, the self-proclaimed mahdi (meaning well guided, a messianic monicker in Shia Islam) attempted to unite the region on stronger religious principles. Ultimately, his successors would finally conquer the region in 1147 and capture Marrakech, which became the new Almohad Caliphate's capital.

In 1172, the Caliphate conquered Sevilla and took control of Islamic Spain. With Marrakech and Sevilla as its two capitals and with ports across the Mediterranean and Atlantic coast, the Almohad Empire was able to build its wealth and reinvest in the arts and architecture, which thrived. Urbanisation increased, with fortifications, gardens and elaborate religious buildings established.

Ultimately, rebellion in the east and the Christian threat to the north would dog the empire for the next 40 years until it was defeated at the Battle of Las Navas de Tolosa in 1212, forcing a retreat out of Spain and back into North Africa. Its power waned until Marrakech was conquered by the Marinids in 1269.

ABOVE The polymath Averroes was a chief judge to the Almohad Caliphate, as well as a philosopher, theologian, mathematician, astronomer and much more

Image source: wiki/LACMA



RIGHT A lot of Benin art now sits in museums around Europe and America

Image source: wiki/Met Museum

BENIN EMPIRE

A land of gods and art
c.1180 – 1897

The empire of Benin began in an almost mythological fashion, passed down through oral history, of the Edo people of southern Nigeria asking the neighbouring kingdom of Ife if one of their princes could take over from the Ogisos kings, known as 'rulers of the sky'. The first oba (king) of Benin would be Eweka, the son of this prince.

Later, it was under Ewuare the Great from 1440 to 1473 that Benin would grow as a major power as he conquered territory and built up the city of Benin itself with walls and a new royal palace. The successive kings of Benin would take on near god-like standing within the community, developing their own cults among the people that included human sacrifice.

Like many of the most successful African empires, gold and ivory were key exports, which Benin was able to sell through Portuguese traders. The nation's artisans and artists were also important thanks to their ivory, brass and wood creations. Soon, however, Benin would also begin capturing adults and children in neighbouring communities to sell into slavery with American and European traders.

Ultimately, infighting among the royal family would see Benin begin to fracture and foreign influence increase until Britain finally saw an opportunity to invade in 1897 and captured the region, burning the city of Benin.

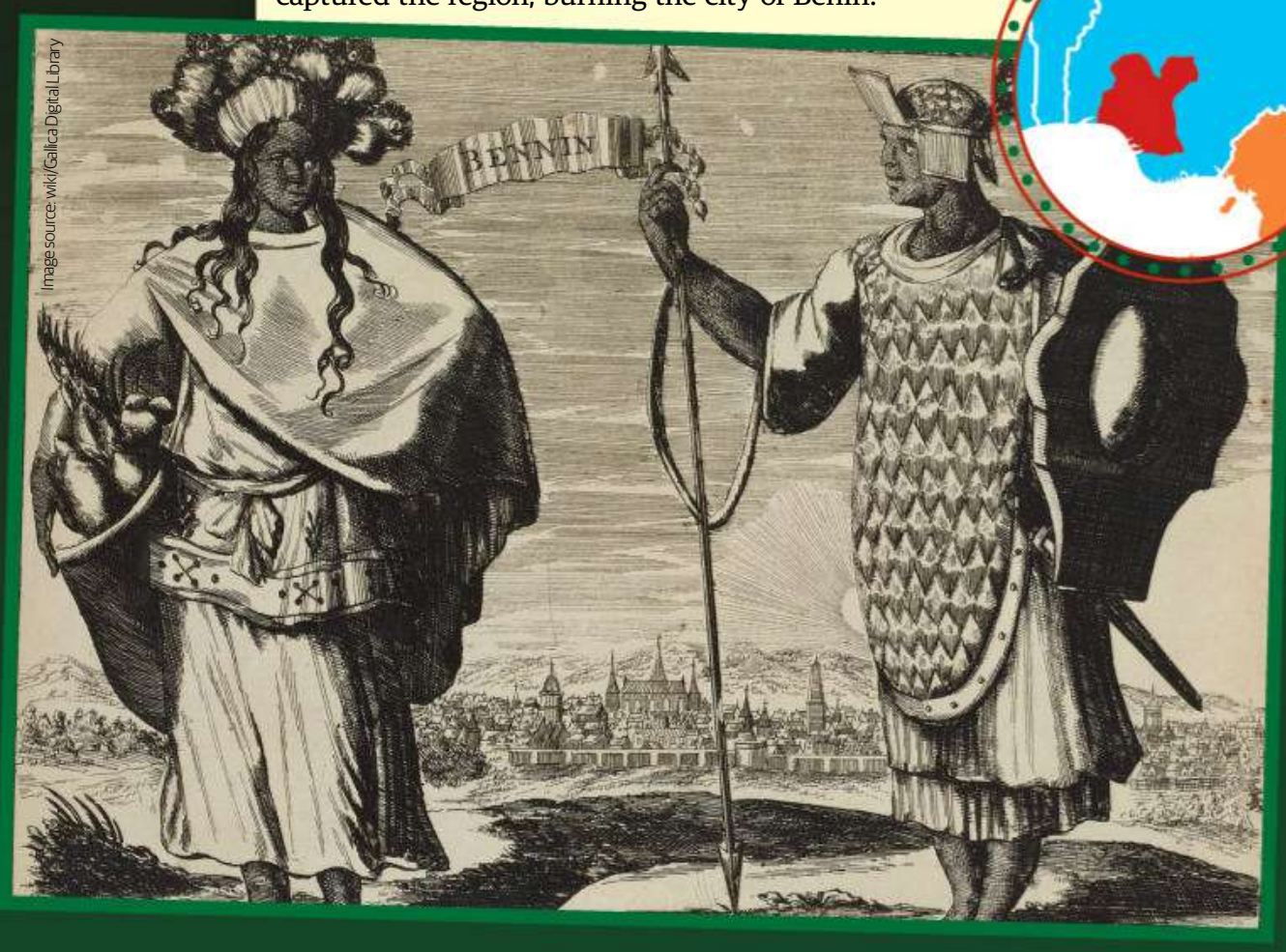


Image source: wiki/Gallica Digital Library

SPIES IN THE PANTRY

Dr Nadine Akkerman uncovers the vital role of women in early modern espionage

Written by Jessica Leggett

Between 1642 and 1651, England was gripped by a civil war – which also extended into Scotland, Ireland and Wales – that pitted the Crown against Parliament and resulted in the execution of King Charles I, as well as the abolition of the monarchy. In the midst of all this turmoil, women were working behind the scenes as spies on both sides of the conflict, proving that they were more active and politically involved than previously assumed. We spoke to Dr Nadine Akkerman, who explores female espionage in her groundbreaking book, *Invisible Agents: Women And Espionage In Seventeenth-Century Britain*.

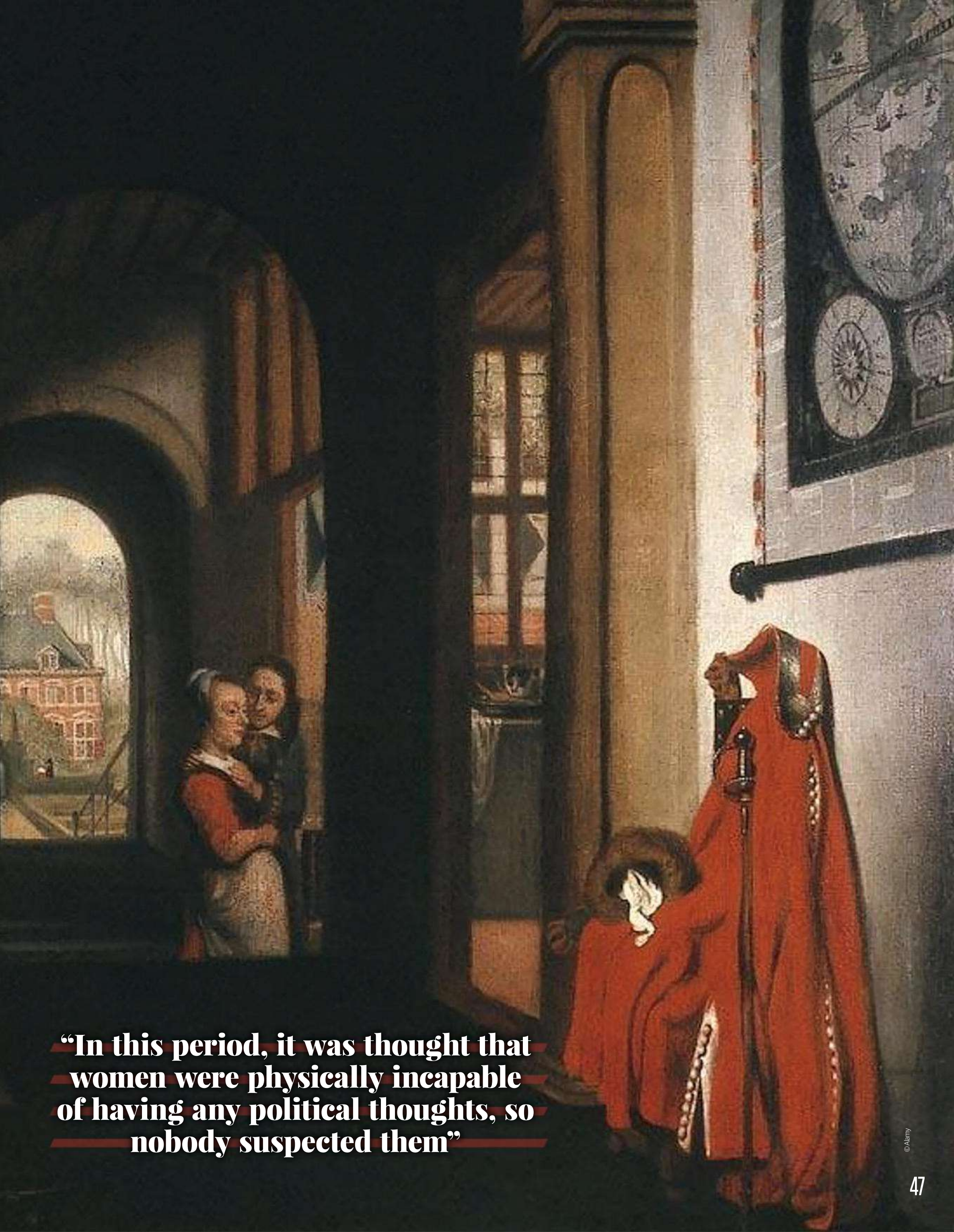
What was it that initially sparked the research process for your book?

I stumbled upon a woman spy while I was researching a completely different topic in the archives, and I was immediately intrigued. I found it funny that this woman was spying, and she turned out to be rather successful, with quite a large spy network. I was thinking, why do I find this so fascinating or funny? And I realised I hadn't read anything about women spies in this period, and I thought perhaps we overlooked other women who were working on the periphery of things, so that's how my journey started.

© Rob Blackham

EXPERT BIO

Dr Nadine Akkerman is a Reader in Early Modern English Literature at Leiden University and a Visiting Fellow at All Souls College, Oxford. She has published extensively on women's history, diplomacy and masques, and curated several exhibitions.



“In this period, it was thought that women were physically incapable of having any political thoughts, so nobody suspected them”

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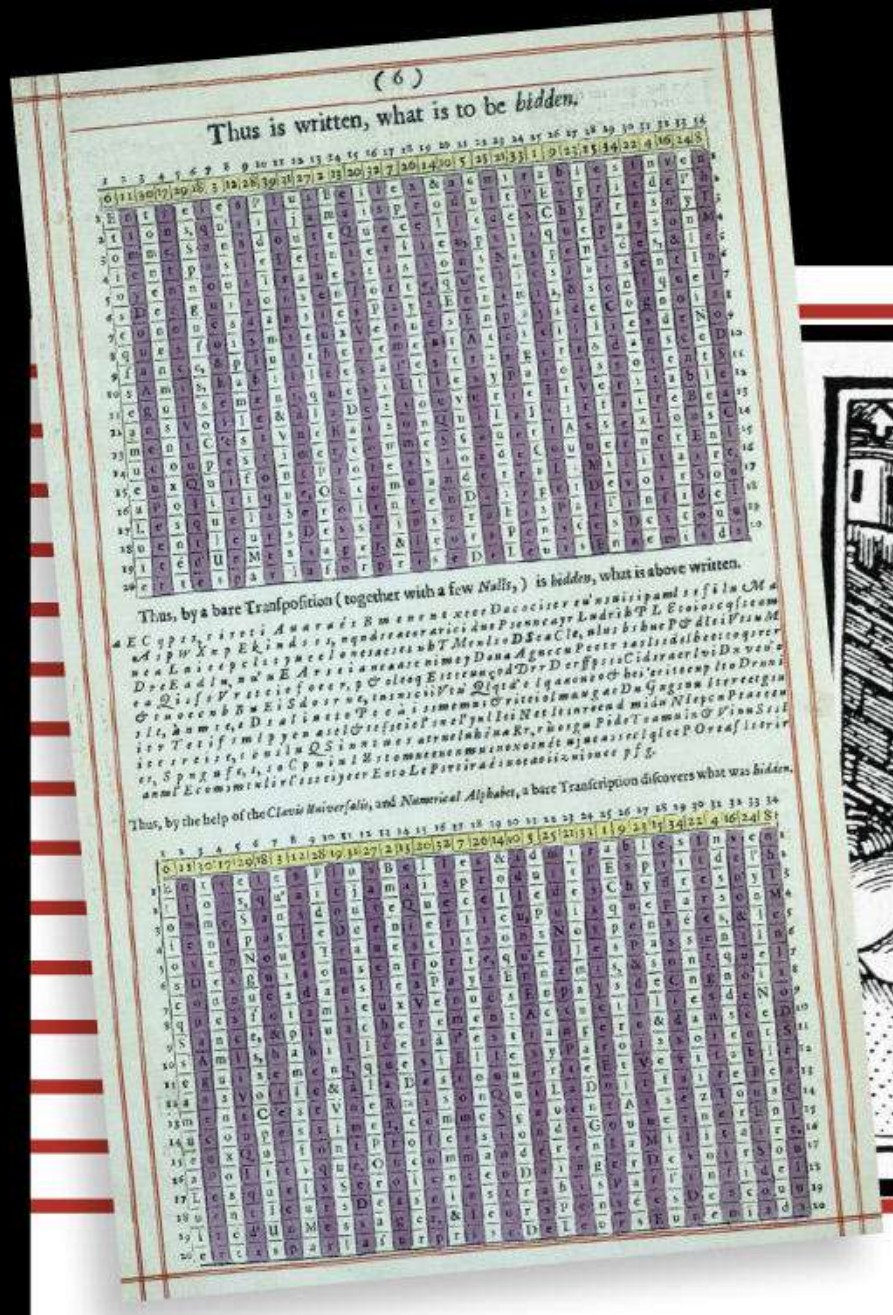
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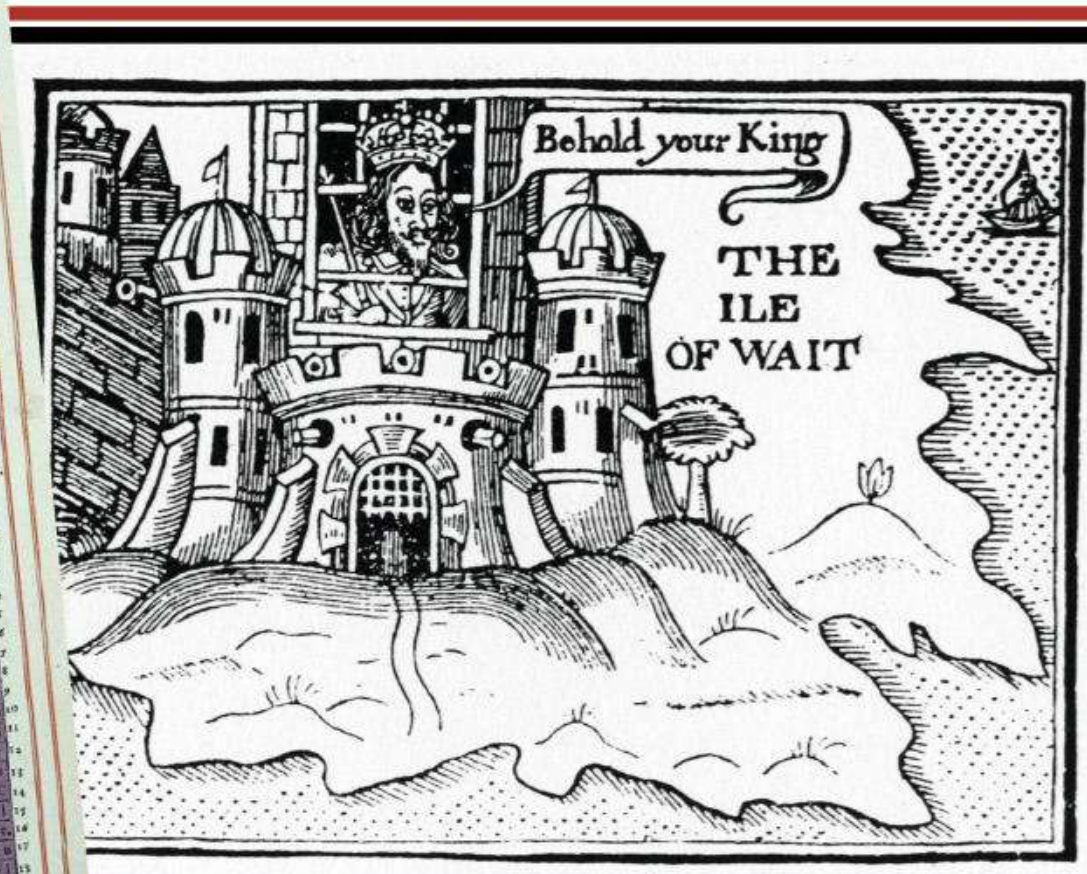
Thus is written, what is to be *bidden.*

Thus, by a bare Tranſpoſition (together with a few *Nulls,*) is *bidden,* what is above written.

Thus, by the help of the *Clavis Univerſalis,* and *Numerical Alphabet,* a bare Tranſcription diſcovers what was *bidden.*



FAR-LEFT
An example of 17th century English cryptology

LEFT
A contemporary woodcut of King Charles I imprisoned in Carisbrooke Castle

RIGHT Lucy Hay, Countess of Carlisle spied for both the Royalists and the Parliamentarians

Why do you think female spies were effective in this period?
I think they were as invisible then as they are now, and they used that to their advantage. In this period it was thought that women were physically incapable of having any political thoughts, so nobody suspected them. They used those biased assumptions to their advantage. In the rare instances when they were caught, they would say, "I couldn't possibly have done this because I'm a woman," and their interrogators went along with those assumptions. They concluded, "She can't possibly have done this, we'll set her free in a week."

Were there aspects that made some women more preferable as spies than others – for example, in terms of social class?
So I chose to focus on the 17th century because it's the time of the Civil War and its aftermath in England. You have two parties: the Royalists, who supported the King; and the Parliamentarians, who supported Parliament. The women on the Royalist side were mostly from aristocratic networks, and their men were either imprisoned because they lost on the battlefield, or had fled to the continent. These women could write to generals or make use of networks that were already in place, and they suddenly took the initiative to start spying. It was assumed that women's information was less reliable, but in a situation of war, when the government had crumbled away anyway, the women just did what they thought had to be done.

Interestingly, I've found that women of the lowest strata of society, such as laundry women, acted as couriers for secret messages. Women on the parliamentarian side pretended to be ladies, but they were clearly not. If you were caught and they assumed that you belonged to the upper class, they would handle you with a bit more care than if you were just a working-class woman. I found that really disturbing. The interrogators listened to them as long as they assumed that they were ladies but when they discovered they were not, they used swear words, that even we would feel uncomfortable with nowadays. No woman would be punished as a spy in this period, yet these working-class women disappeared from the archives. Who knows what happened to them? We just don't know.

"Spymasters were embarrassed to show their superiors that they used women, and they tried to hide them in the account books"

What role did female spies play during Charles I's imprisonment in the Civil War?
While he was locked up in Carisbrooke Castle on the Isle of Wight, there was a little network of women, which is interesting, because we often think of spies as working alone. You have someone from the upper classes, Lady Carlisle, who was turned into the murderous Milady de Winter in *The Three Musketeers* by Alexandre Dumas, which plays with the stereotypes that if women are spies, they must be these dangerous creatures. She was indeed a spy, but perhaps not as dangerous as we think. She wrote in code, and they thought about whether they should organise some Royalist rising, and there were some plans in place to help the King escape. It was his decision in the end not to go along with those plans that actually might have worked. I've often been asked how successful these women spies were – well, it also depends on what is done with the information. You can provide incredible, reliable information, but if the other side decides not to act upon it then things might fail, but that's not the doing of the women spies in question.

BELOW Aphra Behn was hired as a spy in Antwerp by Charles II

Image source: wiki/Yale Center for British Art

Both the Royalists and Parliamentarians didn't believe in the credibility of female spies, so why did they both still use them?
I think for the Royalists they were losing, and they had almost no other option, because it's a power vacuum where all the King's ministers had dispersed and the women just got on with it, while the Parliamentarians still had money to pay for intelligence. So the Royalists had women who perhaps, in the eyes of men, were more deserving of trust because they did not work for money, since there was none, and they worked out of loyalty. As for the

3x © Alamy

Parliamentarian women, like the men, they worked for money, giving them this mercenary character that might not be trusted.

Both sides believed that women's information was less credible due to the thought that all women liked to gossip, so they could not keep secrets. As a spymaster, you needed to rely on your spy keeping information hidden, as well as providing information for you. Spymasters were embarrassed to show their superiors that they used women, and they tried to hide them in the account books. The men were written down as intelligence or spies, but this one spymaster turned the women into nurses, while his predecessor had marked them as spies and intelligence. This man was so embarrassed that he kept working with these women that he decided to put them in the book as nurses. It's hilarious, but also an example of why it is easy for historians to miss, because we're not interested in nurses when researching spies. Even the language they used to talk about these women is coded.

How have these women remained hidden in the archives for so long?

For one, they often used code names themselves. For instance, if you think about James Bond, he does something a spy would never do by using his real name to introduce himself, while Jane Whorwood would call herself 'Helen', and Aphra Behn used 'Agent 160'. They also used different names – there is one spy that we do not know the real name of, who is in the books as Blank Marshall. The invisible agent, he or she used male and female code names. For example, they used John Smith and Margaret Smith. Is this a woman or a man? We don't know.

Can you explain the devices these women used to conceal their messages or information?

You would think that women used their sexual allure to distract men or to gather information. That might have been the case, but of course, the source would never say that had happened, because if a general was seduced by a woman, he wouldn't say. So that might have happened. But what I found is that all these women used the same devices as the male spies during this period. For instance, they would write in cipher code. They also used invisible inks, lemon juice, milk and vinegar – basically your kitchen cupboard is quite handy! They also worked with silver nitrate, which was poisonous. They hid messages in dresses, and there was even a woman who hid a message in her hair, which I love. You have those things, and just the lying, cheating and bribing and eavesdropping, all the things that you expect from a spy.

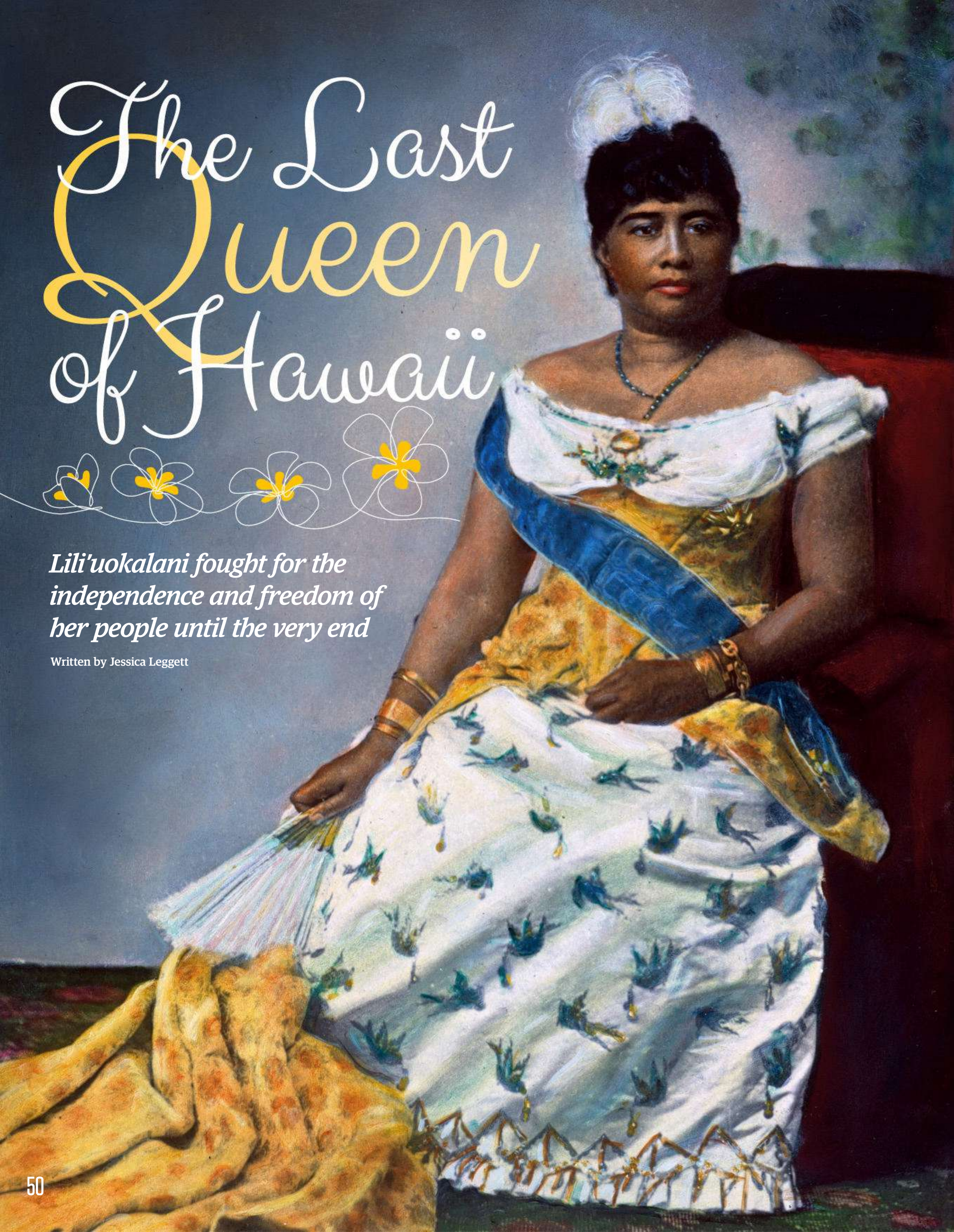
Finally, of the chapters in your book that focus on separate cases studies, which do you think is the most fascinating, and why?

I think the case of Susan Hyde shocked me the most. She was the sister of Edward Hyde, Earl of Clarendon, and we didn't even know of her existence beforehand, let alone that her brother had recruited her as a spy. She died under mysterious circumstances, and was one of the only women who found herself dead in a prison cell. We don't know what happened exactly, but we can still imagine things. I was surprised by it because her brother also wrote one of the first history books about this period, *The History Of Rebellion*, and he's completely silent about her. We often say women are written out of history, but I think a lot of women are not even written *into* history. It's not transitory, and we can only speculate why that is, but it's pretty disturbing. So that's just one of the reasons why this book is so important, because it gives these women a voice.

The Last Queen of Hawaii

Lili'uokalani fought for the independence and freedom of her people until the very end

Written by Jessica Leggett



3x © Alamy

TOP Iolani Palace, the official residence of the Hawaiian monarchy

ABOVE The earliest known photograph of Lili'uokalani

Liliʻuokalani, the first and only queen of Hawaii, was the last sovereign to rule over the islands. Her reign was ended, when she was deposed in a coup by foreign landowners in 1893, a move that was supported by the US military. A devoted monarch, she never wavered in her commitment to the people of Hawaii, even after she lost the throne.

Liliʻuokalani was born in 1838 to Aliʻi Analea Keohokālole and Caesar Kapaʻakea, both high-ranking Hawaiian chiefs. Her family was related to the House of Kamehameha, the ruling dynasty of Hawaii. Her mother, Keohokālole, was an adviser of King Kamehameha III, who had signed the first fully written constitution of the Hawaiian kingdom in 1840. As a young girl, the future queen was known as Lydia Kamakaeha, having been given the English name Lydia at her baptism.

By the time of Lydia's birth, Christianity had been established in the kingdom thanks to the arrival of missionaries. As a result, she was taught by American missionaries at the Royal School, a boarding school for the nobility, where she received an extensive education and became fluent in English. After boarding school, she joined King Kamehameha IV's court and became a close friend of his wife, Queen Emma, her former classmate.

In 1860, she became engaged to John Owen Dominis, the son of a Boston sea captain, who had been raised in Hawaii and educated at the school next to Lydia's. They married two years later and moved into Washington Palace in Honolulu, the Dominis family home that had been named after President George Washington.

Sadly, their marriage was unhappy, with rumours swirling about John's infidelity – they also lived with John's mother, Mary, who didn't like Lydia. However, Lydia later noted in her memoir, *Hawaii's Story By Hawaii's Queen*, that Mary "became more and more a tender and affectionate mother to me as her days were drawing to a close". The couple had no biological children but they did adopt three children together – one of whom was an illegitimate child that John had fathered with one of Lydia's servants in 1883. Her husband would ultimately die just seven months into her reign as queen.

In 1872, Lydia's future changed forever when King Kamehameha V died without leaving a successor to the throne. In accordance with the Hawaiian constitution, it was up to the legislature to establish a new line of succession. However, when their first elected choice – King Lunalilo – died after a year, Lydia's brother Kalākaua was elected as king in 1874. Three years later, their brother and Kalākaua's heir-apparent, WP Leleiohoku, died and Lydia was subsequently named as the new heir-presumptive. From that moment on, she became known by her royal name – Liliʻuokalani.

As the next-in-line to the Hawaiian throne, Liliʻuokalani threw herself into her new role. During this time, she got involved with various charitable causes and founded the Liliʻuokalani Educational Society in 1886 to provide schooling for impoverished children. The following year, she accompanied her sister-in-law, Queen Kapiʻolani, to London where

they represented their family at Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee celebrations. This visit was part of a world tour that also saw Lili'uokalani meet US President Grover Cleveland.

At the same time, there was growing tension within the kingdom. For decades, foreign citizens, namely Americans and Europeans, had been demanding the right to own land in Hawaii. This led to the redistribution of Hawaiian land, known as the Great Māhele, in 1848, which required people to make claims for their land titles. Many indigenous Hawaiians were unaware of this and by 1850 land ownership became privatised thanks to the Kuleana Act. Foreign citizens were now able to purchase territory, leading to foreign plantations and mills becoming quickly established, while many indigenous Hawaiians lost their land.

Soon, the foreign landowners became eager to increase their political power within the kingdom. In 1887, the same year Lili'uokalani had travelled to Britain, there was an attempted coup to overthrow the kingdom by the Hawaiian League, which was made up of non-native men. While they failed to remove King Kalākaua, they succeeded in threatening him to sign the Bayonet Constitution, which limited the power of the monarchy.

Lili'uokalani was shocked by the rebellion, later recalling that her brother had "signed that constitution under absolute compulsion". She was also upset by Kalākaua's decision to renew the Reciprocity Treaty that year, which granted privileged commercial concessions to the US and ceded the port of Pearl Harbor to them. Lili'uokalani would later state that the treaty "put in peril the independence of our nation".

Kalākaua trusted his sister's ability to rule the kingdom enough that he named her as acting regent on his behalf between 1880 to 1881 when he went on a world tour. He also asked her to assume the regency again in 1890 when he travelled to California and San Francisco, despite her pleas for him not to go on account of his ill health. However, the king ignored his sister's concerns and in January 1891 he passed away in the US after falling into a coma following a stroke.

Now the queen of Hawaii, Lili'uokalani was determined to restore the power of the monarchy which had been lost over the years to the US. In her quest, she enjoyed the support of the indigenous Hawaiians, who wanted to protect the kingdom's democratic practices. However, she faced fierce opposition from the foreigners who, realising that she was a threat to their ambitions, wanted to suppress her royal authority.

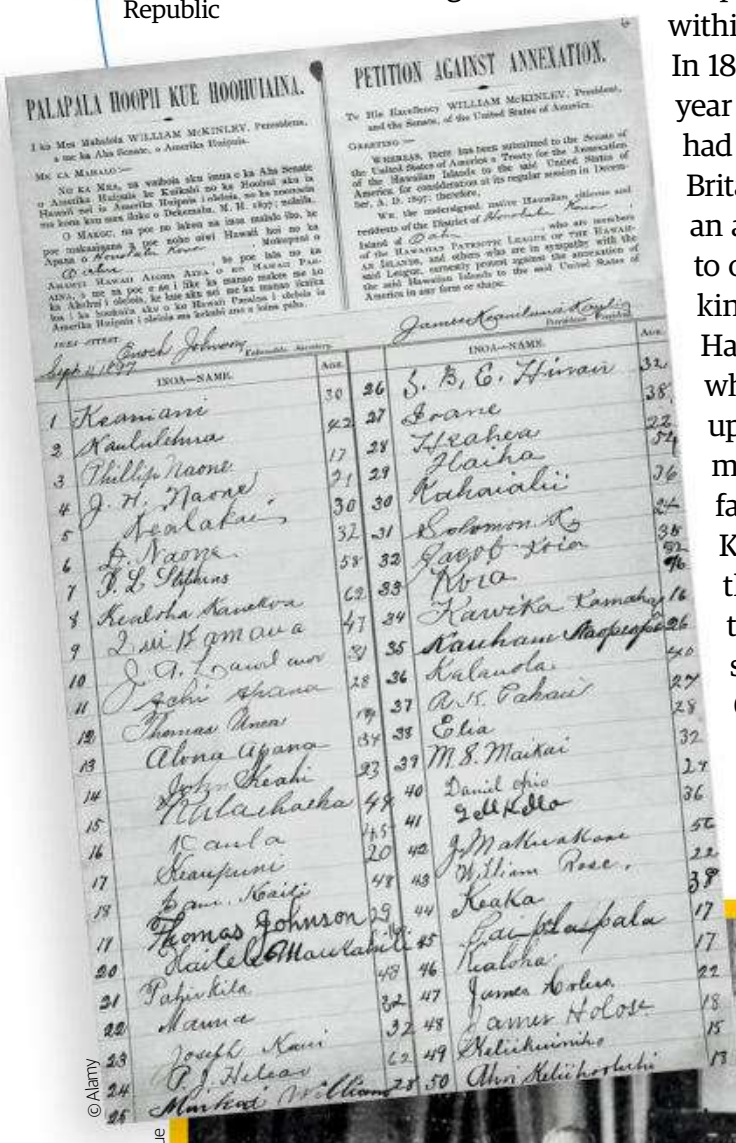
"Lili'uokalani never gave up hope that Hawaii could regain independence and she dedicated herself to the cause"

Thanks to the US increasing import rates on sugar from the islands, there was a growing number foreign landowners who wanted Hawaii to be annexed by the US – if Hawaiian sugar could be sold in the US without paying duties, then the landowners could reap greater profits. In the meantime, Lili'uokalani refused to accept the Bayonet Constitution, proposing a new one in January 1893 that would restore power to the crown as well as removing the right to vote for American and European residents, which had been awarded in 1887.

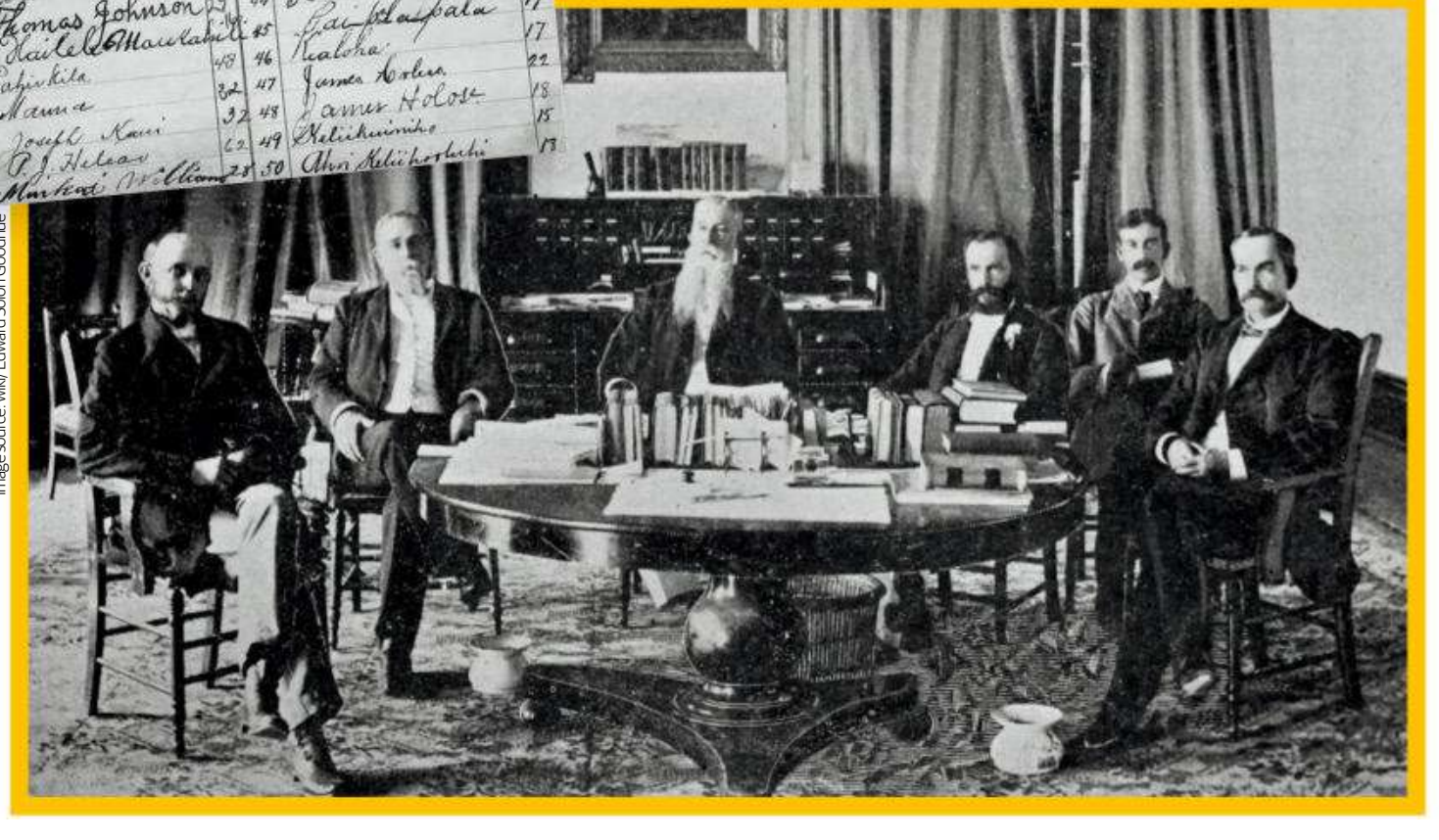
Unfortunately, the queen was stopped in her tracks when her cabinet refused to support her draft for a new constitution, concluding that it would cause a huge backlash. Shortly afterwards, her opponents gathered and formed the Committee of Safety, a 13-member group that wanted to overthrow Lili'uokalani and for Hawaii to be annexed by the US.

The Committee was unofficially led by Lorrin Thurston, a lawyer, businessman and descendant of missionaries, who was one of the authors of the Bayonet Constitution. With the assistance of US minister John L Stevens, who ordered marines from the USS Boston to land ashore to support Thurston, the Committee gathered across the street to the Iolani Palace, the queen's royal residence, demanding her surrender.

Even though there were armed Hawaiians ready to defend her, Lili'uokalani wanted to avoid bloodshed and forbade her people from fighting the American troops and citizens, and she surrendered. The Committee subsequently


PALAPALA HOOPII KUE HOOHUIAINA.

PETITION AGAINST ANNEXATION.



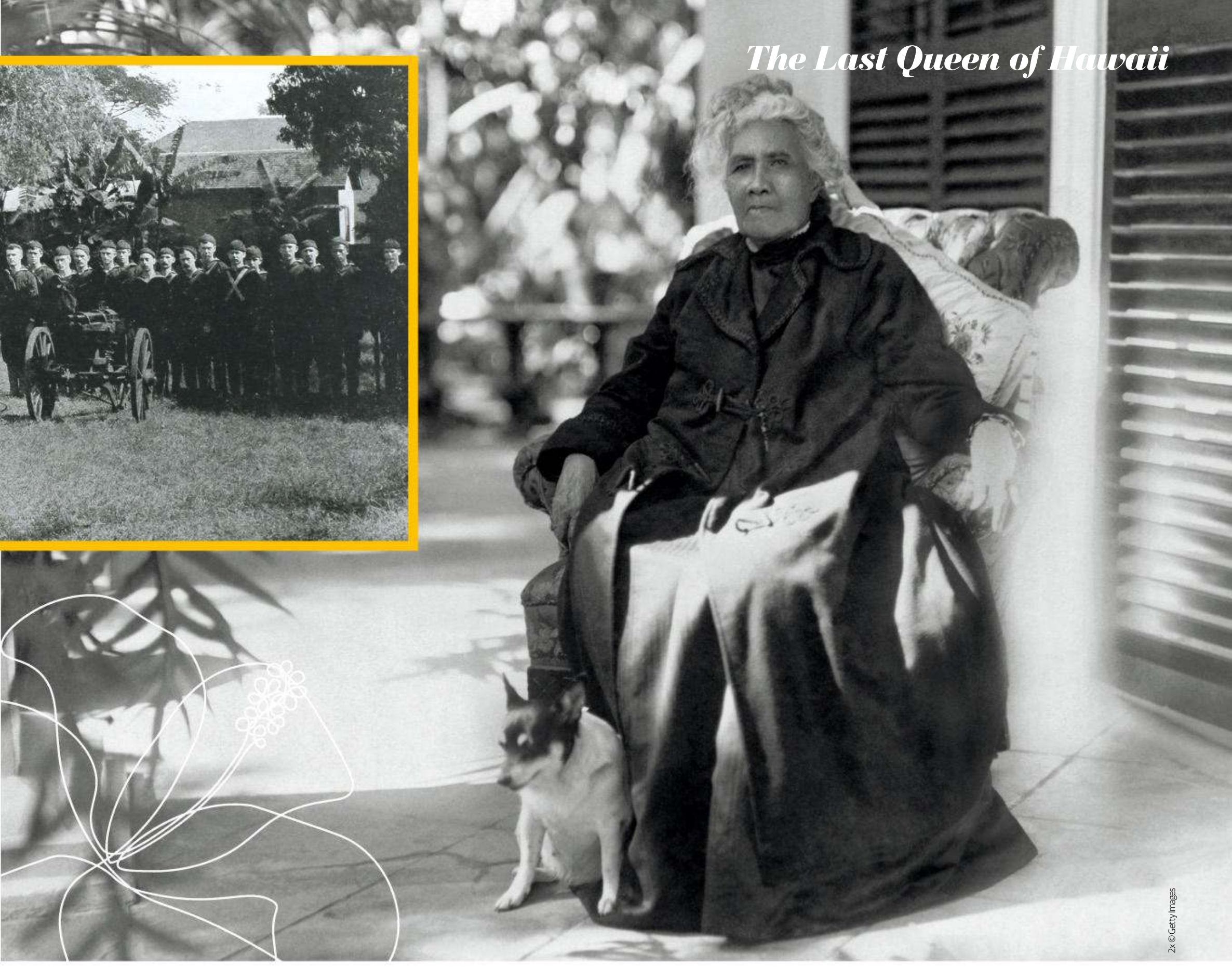
BELOW A signed petition against the annexation of Hawaii

BOTTOM President Dole (centre) and the Cabinet of the Republic

© Alamy

Image source: wiki/ Edward Solon Goodhue

The Last Queen of Hawaii



2x © Getty Images

announced that the queen had been deposed and that the monarchy was abolished, with a Provisional Government established in its place. Sanford B Dole – once a member of the queen's privy council – was installed as president.

Lili'uokalani appealed to President Cleveland to reinstate her and he agreed, but only if she granted amnesty to those who had taken part in the coup. Lili'uokalani initially refused before she agreed to the condition. However, Cleveland's request for her reinstatement was ignored by Dole and the Provisional Government. Hawaii was then declared a republic in 1894 with Dole as president. An anti-imperialist, Cleveland refused the foreign landowners' offer to join the United States.

In January 1895, royalists led an insurrection in their queen's name which was ultimately suppressed. In the aftermath, Lili'uokalani was accused of treason and placed under house arrest in the Iolani Palace by the republic. While she had been aware of the plot she had played no part in it, but regardless Lili'uokalani was convicted and imprisoned in her bedroom. While incarcerated, she formally renounced her claim and abdicated to secure pardons for her supporters who had been jailed following their revolt, fearing that they would be executed.

Although Cleveland opposed the annexation of Hawaii, his successor William McKinley supported it. There were petitions against annexation and Lili'uokalani led the Onipa'a movement, protesting against any move to annex the islands. In 1896, along with her niece and designated heir, Kaiulani, Lili'uokalani travelled with a group of activists to Washington, D.C., where they presented their petitions to the Senate. Despite their efforts, Hawaii was annexed in 1898 by the US, which did not allow the Hawaiians to vote on the matter.

ABOVE-LEFT
A detachment of US marines in Hawaii, 1893

ABOVE
A photograph Lili'uokalani from 1917, the year that she died

But Lili'uokalani never gave up hope that Hawaii could regain independence and she dedicated herself to the cause, alongside her charity work. In 1909, she established the Queen Lili'uokalani Trust for orphaned and destitute children in Hawaii, which remains today and is a big part of her legacy.

A gifted composer and songwriter, she also wrote over 160 songs and chants. Lili'uokalani famously composed *Aloha Oe* (*Farewell to Thee*) in 1878, a song that has been cherished by Hawaiians ever since. Also known as the farewell song, it is interpreted as the queen's sorrow at the loss of her country and its independence.

After six decades, Hawaii was officially made a state of the US in 1959, but to this day many indigenous Hawaiians still protest the colonisation of their lands. As for Lili'uokalani, the beloved queen and humanitarian died at the age of 79 in Honolulu in 1917 having never achieved her dream for Hawaiian independence.

SECRETS FROM ANCIENT CHINA

In the 1970s, five men digging a well made a startling discovery that transformed our understanding of China's history and the brutal events of 2,000 years ago...

Written by John Man

© Getty Images

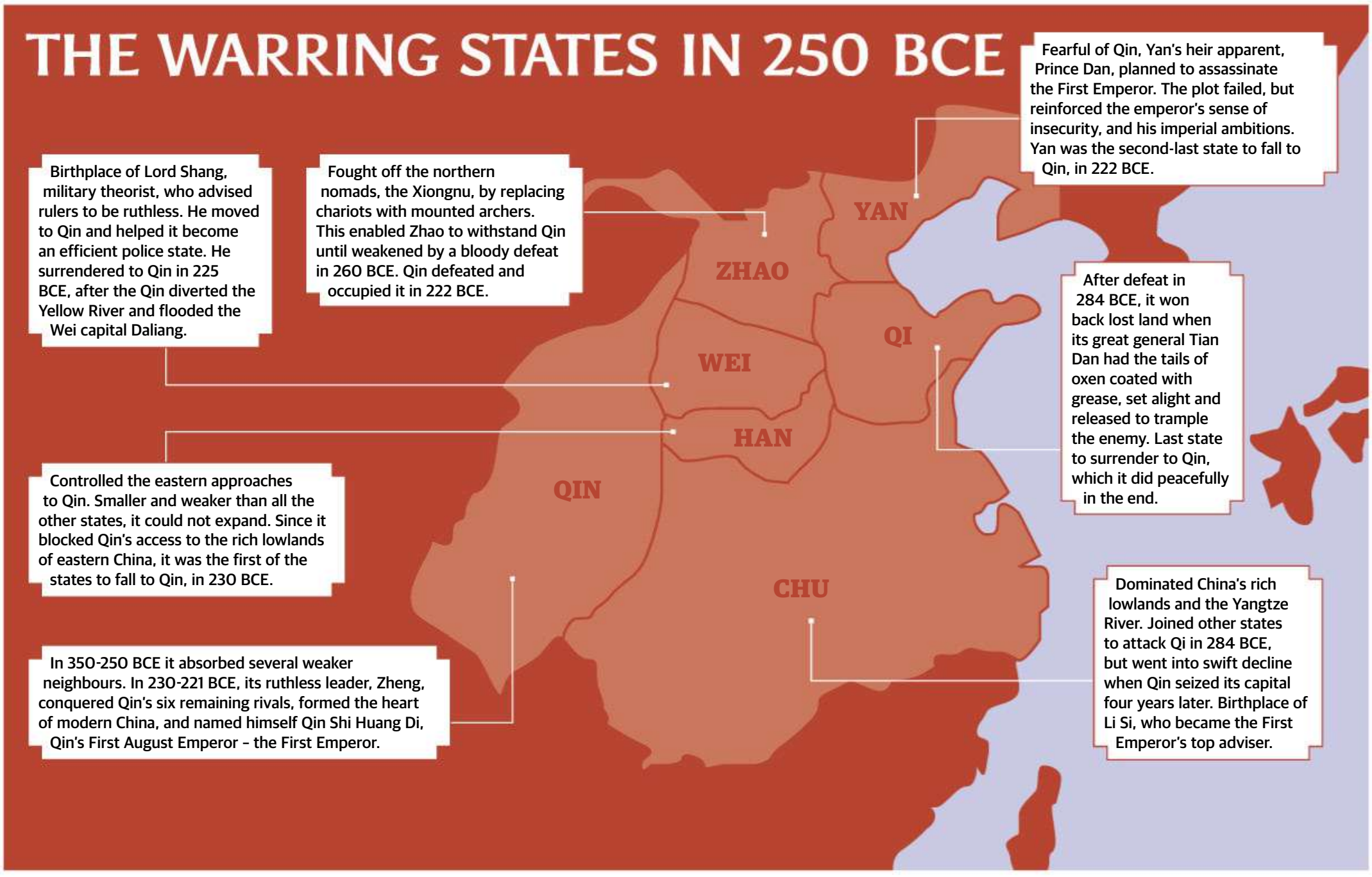
March, 1974. Orchards and fields near Xian, north-central China. In the background is a conical hill. We're in an orchard, but the trees are bare and the grass is dusty. There's a drought. Five peasants, the Yang brothers, are digging a well. They are two metres down, taking turns to dig while the others haul out soil in baskets. Suddenly the one in the pit, Yang Zhefa, shouts: "An earth-god!"

Sticking out of the soil is a head made of clay – it has two eyes, long hair tied in a bun and a moustache. This is bad luck, because it's underground, where the dead live. The men toss the head aside and keep digging, but some local kids see it and throw stones at it. A few adults arrive. An old woman picks up the head, takes it home and puts it on her table. Meanwhile, the Yang brothers make other finds: bricks, bits of bronze and some arrowheads.

A month later, a 24-year-old archaeologist named Zhao Kangmin, who's working in a local museum, hears about the finds. He gets on his bike, rides to the orchard and finds the Yangs, still busy on their well. By now there are more clay bits on their heap of rubbish: legs, arms, two more heads. He takes charge of matters and has the finds brought to his museum in nearby Lintong. He guesses they are important, as he knows the historical background.

Over 2,000 years ago, this was the heartland of the state known as Qin (pronounced Chin). That hill in the background, a massive pyramid of earth, was the tomb of the emperor who united China's warring states into a single nation. Kangmin, like most educated people, knew all about the First Emperor, because the story of his rise to power was told in dramatic terms by Sima Qian, one of China's greatest historians, who was writing a century after the events that he describes.

Qin had been one of seven warring states, all with their own armies and systems of government, rivalling each other. But Qin had made itself the most powerful by becoming a military ▶


THE WARRING STATES IN 250 BCE
Birthplace of Lord Shang, military theorist, who advised rulers to be ruthless. He moved to Qin and helped it become an efficient police state. He surrendered to Qin in 225 BCE, after the Qin diverted the Yellow River and flooded the Wei capital Daliang.
Fought off the northern nomads, the Xiongnu, by replacing chariots with mounted archers. This enabled Zhao to withstand Qin until weakened by a bloody defeat in 260 BCE. Qin defeated and occupied it in 222 BCE.
Fearful of Qin, Yan's heir apparent, Prince Dan, planned to assassinate the First Emperor. The plot failed, but reinforced the emperor's sense of insecurity, and his imperial ambitions. Yan was the second-last state to fall to Qin, in 222 BCE.
YAN
ZHAO
QI
WEI
HAN
QIN
CHU
After defeat in 284 BCE, it won back lost land when its great general Tian Dan had the tails of oxen coated with grease, set alight and released to trample the enemy. Last state to surrender to Qin, which it did peacefully in the end.
Controlled the eastern approaches to Qin. Smaller and weaker than all the other states, it could not expand. Since it blocked Qin's access to the rich lowlands of eastern China, it was the first of the states to fall to Qin, in 230 BCE.
In 350-250 BCE it absorbed several weaker neighbours. In 230-221 BCE, its ruthless leader, Zheng, conquered Qin's six remaining rivals, formed the heart of modern China, and named himself Qin Shi Huang Di, Qin's First August Emperor – the First Emperor.
Dominated China's rich lowlands and the Yangtze River. Joined other states to attack Qi in 284 BCE, but went into swift decline when Qin seized its capital four years later. Birthplace of Li Si, who became the First Emperor's top adviser.

dictatorship, a police state in which the ruler had total control. For example, as one chronicler recorded, "Anyone who failed to report criminal activity would be chopped in two at the waist." The system worked. By 238 BCE, Qin was a rich, self-confident kingdom under the control of a new 22-year-old ruler, King Zheng.

Zheng was fanatical about security. He thought he could make Qin even safer by using his tough, mobile army to extend his control over the other six states. To ensure victory, he turned his nation into a war machine fuelled by good food supplies, ruthless tax gatherers, military service for almost all men, and highly trained soldiers.

We have no details of his conquests, which started in 230 BCE, but in nine years he defeated all the other six kingdoms. In 221 BCE, he was master of a unified China, which gets its name from his kingdom. This was not China as it is today, just the central and northern bits, but ever since then, the idea of unity has been at the heart of Chinese history. Zheng gave himself a suitably grand title: Qin Shi Huang Di, meaning Qin (or China) First August Emperor. Non-Chinese usually call him the First Emperor.

Now he needed to weld his conquests together with a revolution in government and vast building projects that would control his people and keep enemies out. First, he ordered a revolution in administration, setting up a government of 36 regions, each divided into counties, and each with both civil and military governors, overseeing tax collectors and judges. All the different systems of law, money, weights, measures and even styles of clothing were standardised.

"THERE ARE RECORDS OF CRUEL PUNISHMENTS, INCLUDING BEING TORN APART BY CARRIAGES"

Dissent of any kind was crushed. According to Sima Qian, when a scholar dared criticise the emperor for breaking with tradition, Prime Minister Li Si pointed out that the roots of rebellion lay with scholars and books: "Those who use the past to criticise the present should be put to death!" So the royal archives "were all destroyed. How regrettable!" – burned, said Sima Qian. This episode, known as the Burning of the Books, is generally accepted as true, as is another claiming that "over 460" scholars were buried alive. But Sima Qian, writing during the next dynasty, was keen to discredit his predecessors, and experts question the true meaning of the words widely translated as "burned" and "buried". Anyway, countless Qin books survived. These record cruel punishments, including being torn apart by carriages and being boiled to death. But there are no records of the execution of scholars. It seems the emperor's new legal system actually prevented gross abuses of power.

Peace had one startling result: the king's vast army – millions of soldiers from all seven nations – was no longer needed. Something had to be done with them, or risk rebellion. So the soldiers were set to work on huge projects: over 6,000km of paved roads,

BELOW Qin Shi Huang Di unified the six rival kingdoms and began reforms

Image source: wiki/ Homa & Sekey Books

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ABOVE-LEFT Many of the damaged terracotta warriors have been meticulously pieced back together

ABOVE The level of detail in the terracotta statues' design is astounding

LEFT Every terracotta warrior discovered so far has a unique feature

The emperor's greatest achievements

Unification

The First Emperor is referred to as China's First Unifier. There have been many others since, the latest being Mao Zedong, who created Communist China from the ruins of war and revolution in 1949. There have been many periods of division and China has changed shape often. Today's China is 3.4-times the size of Qin, but for 2,000 years, China has looked back to the First Emperor as a symbol of the ultimate ideal: unity.

Standardisation of coins, axles, colours and weights

The Qin Empire was held together by a series of measures that made Qin standards universal. Black was the colour of flags and uniforms. Every state abandoned its own coins for round copper ones with a square hole in the middle. Cartwheels were given a single gauge, so that they all ran in the same ruts. Weights and measures became uniform. Law and order was harsh but equal.

Standardisation of writing

China had had a script for 1,500 years, but it changed with the centuries and each state had its own variant. Under the First Emperor, all regional variations gave way to a single 'seal script'. This was perhaps his most significant reform, because all officials could understand his orders and each other, whatever their dialects. Today, China's script still binds the nation together. Mandarin speakers may not understand spoken Cantonese, but both understand the same written characters.

Roads

Fast travel was vital for messengers, troops and royal retinues, so the emperor put his labourers to work building roads – almost 7,000km in all. All the nation's 270 palaces were connected. In part, this was for security. He travelled between them in secret and executed anyone who revealed where he was. One of the roads ran 800km northward across the Ordos semi-desert so that troops and workers could get to the border – and the Great Wall – as quickly as possible.

Great Wall of China

This was nothing like today's Great Wall, which dates from 1,500 years later. At the time, there were many walls. After unification, there was only one enemy: the nomadic 'barbarians' of the northern grasslands. Fearsome mounted archers, they often galloped south on raids. The emperor's huge workforce joined up many small walls along the northern borders of Zhao and Yan, creating a single barrier stretching across northern China for 2,500km.

THE PAINTED WARRIORS

The warriors today are clay-coloured, as are the reproductions bought by tourists. That's what seems 'authentic', but it's wrong. They were originally painted in vivid colours, which were stripped away by their earthy blanket. In the First Emperor's day, the rich loved colours because they were expensive to make and thus symbols of luxury. Surviving flecks of paint reveal what the statues were like, with pink (for faces), red, green, brown and purple – especially so-called 'Chinese purple', made from a complex mixture of barium, copper, quartz and lead.

half a dozen royal palaces, military bases, and – most famously – the first Great Wall.

One the First Emperor's grandest projects was his tomb, built near the ancient capital, Xian, at the foot of a sacred mountain, Mount Li. Records claim that 700,000 worked on it, although 40,000 is a more accurate figure, and they spent a year digging out a pit for the tomb itself. Later, after his death, the tomb would be covered with the hill that is still there today – 50 metres high, 350 metres per side; the size of the Great Pyramid, though made of earth, not stone.

spirit world. Everything was designed to remake the emperor's life on Earth – government, banquets, entertainments, hunting, fighting.

The tomb itself was perhaps devoted to government. Sima Qian says it contains a model of the empire, with the rivers picked out in flowing mercury, the night sky portrayed in the ceiling, and all defended by crossbows ready to fire on intruders. It sounds unlikely, but in 1982 archaeologists probed the tomb with 560 drillings that revealed the outlines of a building and slight traces of mercury vapour. The truth will only be known if and when the tomb is opened.

"THE EMPEROR, LIKE HIS WHOLE SOCIETY, WAS OBSESSED WITH LIFE AFTER DEATH"

What was it all for? The answer is: to live forever in the spirit world. The emperor, like his whole society, was obsessed with life after death. He believed the next world mirrored this one, and that a dead person needed familiar objects in the grave to recreate life. The rich and powerful needed big tombs, filled with grave goods like chariots, weapons, animals and servants, both real ones, killed and buried with their lord, and models, for a life-like image could in some magical way become 'real' in the

But the emperor would also need an army, and so he commissioned something that was totally original and unique. He had his artisans, hundreds of them, make thousands of full-size warriors out of clay, all painted in vivid colours and carrying real bronze weapons (which was why they had to be full-size).

Much of this work must have been done before his death, which was of some unspecified cause at the age of 50 in 210 BCE. However, for his burial, tens of thousands of workers rushed to finish the tomb and its many outlying graves. The terracotta warriors were placed in three pits 1.5km to the east of the tomb. Well armed with spears, lances, swords and crossbows, they were lined up on a tiled floor as if on a parade ground, ready to help their lord fight off any spirit armies coming to take over his empire. The pits, nine metres deep, were roofed with wooden beams, twice as thick as telegraph poles, weighing 500kg each, over 6,000 in all. The beams were covered with matting, on top of which workers piled three metres of earth.

Then they vanished. There were no records. Sima Qian makes no mention of them. After a generation or two, they were forgotten, the memory of them erased by the chaos and civil war that destroyed the Qin Empire.

So when the warriors were found in 1974, they were a total surprise. And when archaeologists got to work there was another surprise: not a single soldier was found intact. All had been shattered. Today's display is the result of painstaking reconstruction. So far, 1,000 have been

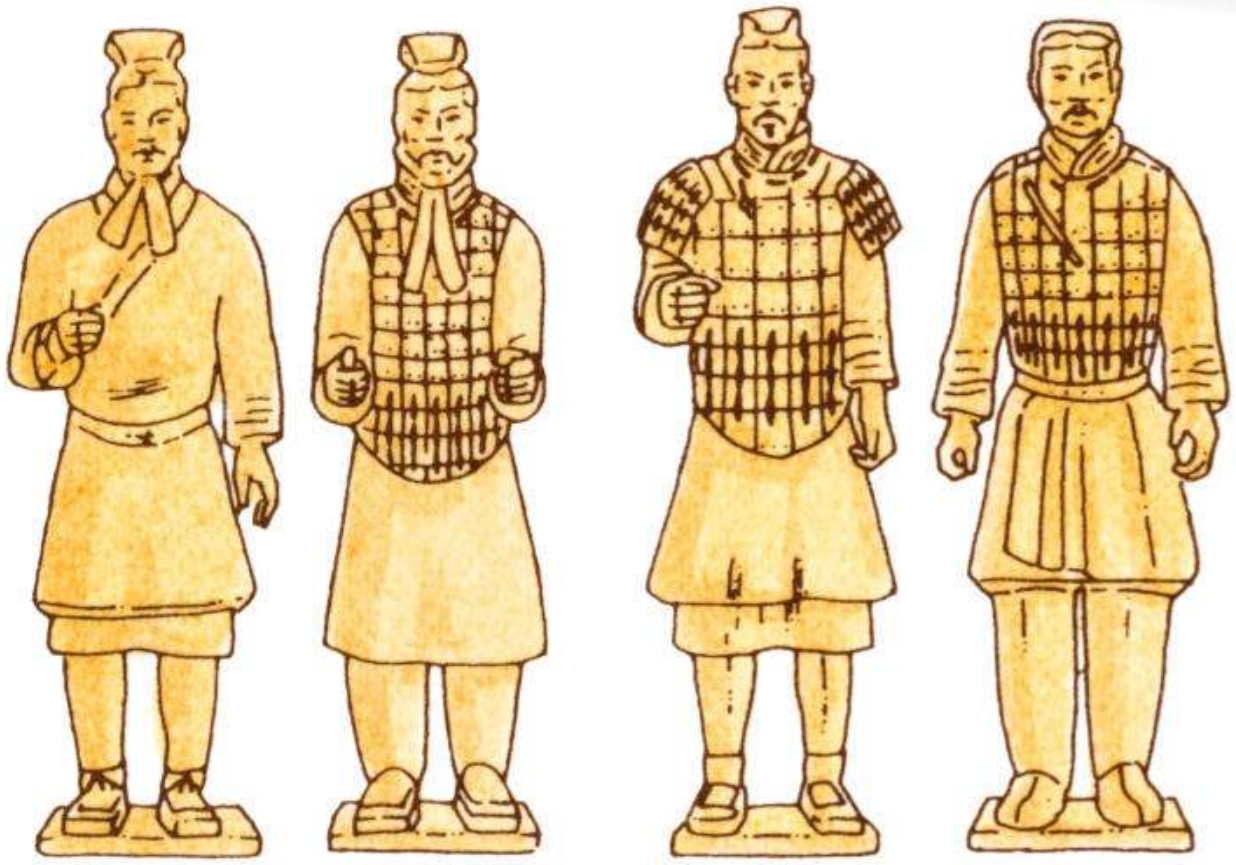
Weapons

The mock-soldiers carried real weapons made of bronze and wood by the thousands. Swords (17 have been found) were for high-ranking officers, while specialists used bows and crossbows. Rank-and-file soldiers had halberds and spears.

restored, though all their bright colours vanished into the earth that buried them. The rest are still buried, awaiting techniques that can ensure better preservation. No one knows exactly how many there are: the 7,000-8,000 is an estimate, as is the number of 670 horses. But this is not enough for an army. The emperor's real army numbered in the tens of thousands. Perhaps there are more to be discovered. After all, there have been many other finds over the years, including horse skeletons, tombs of officials, other types of terracotta statues, bronze birds, and two astonishing half-sized chariots, complete with horses and drivers.

But the star turn is the army, now partly restored from jigsaw puzzles of bits and pieces. Not a single one in the main pit has been found complete. All were shattered – but how? Fire was somehow responsible, for the earth above them was baked solid. But how did the fire start, and how could it break every single statue?

To answer, we must become detectives. It must have had something to do with the rebels who rose against the Qin dynasty ▶



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Unique designs

Of the 7,000-8,000 buried and broken figures, about 1,000 have been restored, and each one is different. They are not portraits, but ideals – handsome, well built, serene. The artists just varied the details, like eyebrows, beards and moustaches.

The elixir of life

Some people taught that the body could be made incorruptible by death, and so become a xian, an immortal. For centuries, Daoists experimented with elixirs – mixtures including gold, mercury, arsenic and lead – undeterred by the often fatal results. The First Emperor believed in the elixir, and took seriously a charlatan named Xu Fu, who told him it could be found in islands off the east coast. Xu promised to find it, but did nothing. In 210 BCE, the emperor, when touring the east, found and questioned Xu, who claimed he had been prevented from sea travel by a large fish. The emperor, deranged by paranoia, believed him and fired arrows into the sea to kill the non-existent monster. Soon afterward, he died.

Image source: wiki/kuniyoshiproject.com

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FAR-LEFT Many terracotta horses were also made for the emperor's tomb

LEFT Restoration of the terracotta warriors is currently in progress

RIGHT A depiction of what is believed to be buried under the mound – the transparent pyramid in the picture representing the earth on top of it

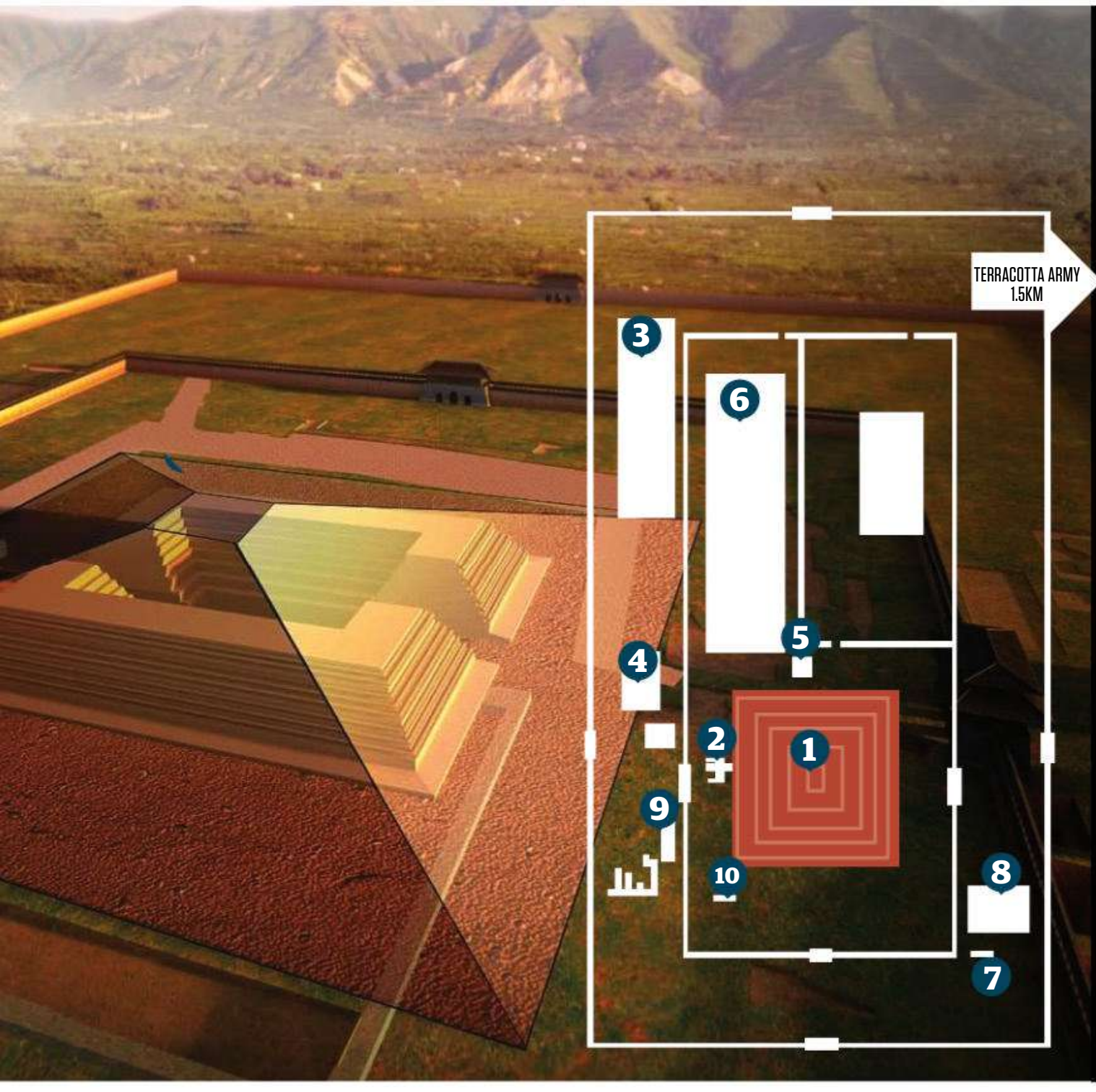
after the First Emperor's death in 210 BCE, beginning eight years of civil war before the Han Dynasty took over in 202 BCE. In a film shown to tourists in the Terracotta Army museum, rebel soldiers break through doors and torch the place. But there were no doors, no mass break-in. There is no evidence of the roof being dug up. So there was no oxygen to sustain a fire. That's the mystery: a fire, but no means to keep it burning.

This might have happened: as the empire fell apart, a rebel army approached the tomb, with no army to stop them. Historian Ban Gu, writing 200 years later, says the Qin generals advised: "There are forced labourers at the Mount Li grave complex. Grant them amnesty and supply them with arms." This was done, which temporarily blocked the rebel army, and also stopped work on the First Emperor's tomb. This explains why there are three pits full of soldiers – but a fourth pit is completely empty, awaiting more warriors, which never arrived.

In Lintong, rebels knew about the Terracotta Army from the hastily recruited labourers. So in early 206 BCE, with the Qin palaces ablaze, rebels arrived at the tomb-site, eager for more booty. The vast tomb itself was too much of a challenge. But they knew of the buried army, knew also that it contained real weapons.

There was no time to dig up the earth and beams. The best way in was to dig straight down. The evidence is there. In Pit No 2, a hole like a small mineshaft bypasses the roof and enters the pit. It's a metre or so wide – big enough for one person at a time to enter, big enough to hand weapons to the surface.

Imagine the first rebel soldier breaking through, seeing nothing, calling for a blazing torch. Its flickering light reveals the front lines of clay soldiers in their original painted finery, with pink faces and brightly coloured coats. In cavernous corridors, the soldiers range backward into darkness and – most importantly – they're all armed. For fighting men, it's a treasure-trove.



THE BURIAL SITE

1. The tomb
The burial mound is around 50 to 75 metres high. Soundings suggest that beneath it is a stepped half-pyramid up to 150 metres wide with two entrances. Inside, presumably, is the emperor's coffin.

2. Pit of the Bronze Chariots
Two half-size chariots were found in 1980. One (the so-called High Chariot) was open, the other (the 'Comfortable Chariot') was enclosed, for the emperor's spirit. Both were crushed, but are now restored.

3. Servants' quarters
The worship of the emperor needed a staff of hundreds. They lived here, with offices and washing facilities.

4. Banqueting room
It was probably used to provide meals for all the functionaries and to make the food offered every day to the emperor's spirit.

5. Resting hall
This 57-by-62-metre complex was above ground; the centre for the cult devoted to the emperor.

6. Side hall
In these above-ground buildings, family members would prepare themselves for the frequent rituals of mourning and worship.

7. Pit of the 'acrobats'
Twelve figures, dressed in skirts. Eleven of them are perhaps acrobats, and one is possibly a wrestler.

8. Stone armour pit
Discovered in 1998, this pit contains about 120 suits of limestone armour, all broken. Limestone does not make real armour – it's too heavy and too fragile. It was probably a symbolic defence against evil spirits.

9. Menagerie pits
Several pits that each contain the skeleton of a bird or animal. They possibly symbolise the First Emperor's hunting ground or zoo.

10. Pit of the officials
Discovered in 2000, it contained 20 horse skeletons and 12 terracotta figures. Long sleeves and writing tools make clear that they are officials.

Others slither down the hole, holding more torches. The intruders begin to weave and shove their way through, grabbing weapons, passing them back to the tunnel. "There is no evidence of organised destruction," says the army's senior archaeologist, Yuan Zhongyi. "We found remains of warriors which seem to have fallen in a zig-zag pattern, which suggests they were pushed over as people forced their way through."

Then, in the chaos, something cut the break-in short. Fire. A torch smouldering beside a wooden pillar or one of the wooden chariots. For what happened next, we must rely on modern fire-protection engineers, like Joe Lally, an archaeologist with the US Department of the Interior's Bureau of Land Management in Albuquerque, New Mexico. In his computerised scenario, there is no exit for the smoke. The corridors fill with smoke in about four minutes, forcing the thieves to crawl to the exit, toppling more warriors and horses. They have only a few precious minutes to escape, and there is only room for one at a time up the exit shaft. They all made it because no charred skeletons were found with the smashed soldiers.

There is something odd about this fire. It takes a powerful hold, but it needs a flow of oxygen to keep it going. There's not enough coming in through the small entrance, so the flames go out.

"IN THE CHAOS, SOMETHING CUT THE TOMB BREAK-IN SHORT"

Yet we know that fire completely destroyed the pit. How? This was a special sort of fire, like those that spread underground along seams of coal. Coal-seam fires are started by bush fires or lightning and there are thousands of them around the world, burning very slowly, for a very long time. There's one under the town of Centralia, Pennsylvania, that has been smouldering for half a century, and it may go on doing so for another 250 or so years.

Imagine the scene: in the main pit, the flames are dead, the pit dark again, smoke drifting along the corridors. But the fire has found a home in the ceiling, where the earth keeps a lid on it. Traces of oxygen seep in, just enough to keep the ceiling smouldering. Slowly, the slow fire eats away at the beams. At some point, charred timbers fall, breaking a piece off a warrior or two. A section of earth follows.

And so it goes, for years, the warriors, chariots and crossbow-men crushed by the falling beams, the surface subsiding bit by bit, filled again by water-borne mud, until not a trace remains of what lies beneath – until the five Yang brothers find an earth-god while digging a well.

How Tanks Changed War Forever

Richard Cutland explains how these technical marvels changed history and why World Of Tanks is an incredible way to experience them for yourself

Why was the introduction of the Mark I tank to World War I in 1916 so important?

The war on the Western Front was at a virtual stalemate. Trench warfare was characterised by sudden offensives, one side tried to break through the other's lines with massive artillery bombardments followed by tens of thousands of men attacking via no-man's land. The cost of these advances in human lives was vast. Machine guns would cut down man after man from hundreds of yards away, and all this while advancing on a dug in and well-protected enemy.

A handful of inventors and visionary engineers all arrived at the same idea – build some kind of armed and armoured vehicle that could create gaps in the barbed wire, knock out machine gun posts and bunkers, and protect infantry long enough for the trench networks to be captured. A vehicle that could ultimately, and oddly, 'save lives'.

What was the legacy of the Mark I's design on later tanks?

The Mark I certainly had its limitations. Their slow speed made them easy targets for artillery, and while they were armed with machine guns and cannons (depending on whether it was a 'male' or a 'female') these were arranged on their sides, meaning the whole vehicle had to be moved to bring them to bear on the enemy. What's more, crew comfort was nonexistent: the Mark I tanks were dark, noisy, incredibly hot and full of engine fumes.

However, the British saw the potential of this basic design and constantly updated it. An improved version, the Mark IV, came into service in 1917. Ultimately, these machines were the 'loose blueprint' for the tank to come in the future, not only in terms of design but also the change in tactical doctrine.

EXPERT BIO

RICHARD CUTLAND

A 30-year veteran of the British Army Royal Tank Regiment, Cutland is Head of European Military Relations for Wargaming.net and the host of the Tank Nuts podcast

How did the introduction of the Mark I change battlefield tactics in WWI?

Military technology of the time favoured the defence. Even if an attack did succeed, it was almost impossible to exploit the breach before the enemy rushed in reinforcements to stabilise the front. The first 50 tanks were sent to France in August 1916 to join the British push that summer along the River Somme. They were thrown into the attack on 15 September with little preparation, and almost half of them broke down before coming into contact with the enemy. They managed to advance a couple of miles through two of the three German lines, inflicting heavy casualties, but lack of communication (they had no radios) and lack of coordination with infantry and artillery stalled the attack. Hard lessons were learnt that became the basis of armoured warfare doctrine going forward.

What lengths does Wargaming go to for authenticity and accuracy in its recreations of these incredible machines?

First, the design team, along with the historical consultants and a multitude of other people, begins work on preparing the potential vehicles. Then the next stage is documentation. This involves archives, blueprints, sketches, military photographs, news reels, and 3D scans where possible.

We then get designers to build what we call a 'historical description'. We detail tactical and technical characteristics all about the weaponry, including the elevation and depression angles, and armour thickness is obviously incredibly important.

We also get data on maximum speeds, but not just maximum speeds as you would find on a source like Wikipedia. They're the maximum speeds on various terrains.

Only after all that provisional work is done do we then move onto the next stage, which is the 'tech tree' stage. Then it gets a bit more game-orientated. Balance is, of course, a challenge because we are talking about a game that has tanks which very possibly never fought against each other on the battlefield. So to make sure that nothing is overpowered, or alternatively underwhelming, we test heavily to ensure its playability.

This process can vary wildly in terms of how long it takes. The easiest tanks might be able to be completed and dropped into the game in as few as four weeks, or it could take upwards of six months if the details on the tank are scarce. To assist in its research, Wargaming maintains partnerships with tank museums across the globe, and this process involves the multiple teams across the organisation, from the dedicated researchers that Wargaming keeps on staff right through to the programmers and testers.

***What can players look forward to learning about tank mechanics and tactics from playing* World Of Tanks?**

The peculiarities of each vehicle, what is good or less so in its abilities, from firepower to protection to mobility. In terms of playing, the value of preparation and knowing the terrain – as with real tank warfare the use of terrain is critical both in terms of movement and the selection of fire positions. In addition, teamwork and the basics of communication are a key to winning on the virtual battlefield.

World Of Tanks is known as the world's largest virtual tank museum and appeals to history lovers globally. Learn about the tank then take it into battle.

NO BETTER TIME TO PLAY

World Of Tanks' Holiday Ops event, featuring the legendary Chuck Norris, can't be missed!

If this insight into the impact of tanks on modern warfare has piqued your interest then *World Of Tanks* is an incredible way to experience them first hand. The level of detail that Wargaming goes into, working closely with tank museums globally, means that you couldn't ask for a more realistic recreation of some of the most famous battleground machines. It's the greatest virtual tank museum in the world.

But even more exciting than that is the Holiday Ops event, running through January 2021, which is the biggest *World Of Tanks* event of the year. Featuring legendary actor and man of action Chuck Norris, there are new missions to experience, new rewards to unlock and daily challenges. And you can unlock the Pz.Sfl. IC, a German Tier IV Premium tank destroyer, with a 100% trained crew and a Garage slot when you join. Perfect for new starters to the game.

If you're interested in tanks and the complex tactical warfare that they engage in then *World Of Tanks* is an amazing way to experience these incredible machines for yourself from the comfort of your PC. **Join now at bit.ly/AAHWorldOfTanks**

German troops parade triumphantly through the streets of Warsaw after capturing the city

The view over the wing of a German bomber as it circles Warsaw during the siege of September 1939

© Getty Images

Greatest Battles

SIEGE OF WARSAW

POLAND, 1-27 SEPTEMBER 1939

Written by David Smith

In the early hours of 1 September 1939, the German battleship Schleswig-Holstein fired the first shot of World War II. The German campaign plan, Fall Weiss (Case White) swung into action and the world was introduced to a ruthless new form of warfare that would later be recalled as 'blitzkrieg' (lightning war).

On the seventh day of the campaign, German tanks approached the outskirts of Warsaw and the stage was set for a brief yet brutal siege.

THE INVASION FORCE

In 1939 the German Army was not quite the smooth-running machine it's usually characterised as. As war approached only a fraction of the army had been mechanised and the bulk of it still relied on horses, bicycles and its own feet.

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By concentrating all of its mechanised and motorised divisions on Poland, however, the German military was able to create massive local superiority. An advantage in tanks of 2,511 to 615 would no doubt have proved decisive enough, but the German campaign plan allowed them to enjoy a better than eight-to-one advantage at the points of attack.

The tanks involved were not the powerful behemoths of the later war years. Tanks were utilised in an anti-infantry role and the majority were Panzerkampfwagen Types I and II, armed with machine guns or 20mm cannon respectively. There were less than 100 of the more powerful Panzerkampfwagen III, armed with a 37mm gun, while the 75mm-equipped Type IV was used as a fire support platform. The Germans also enjoyed a significant advantage in artillery, with 5,805 guns to 2,065 for the Poles.

What differentiated the German use of armour was its massing in panzer divisions (combined arms units with tanks as well as motorised artillery and infantry). The use of high-quality radios was also of critical importance, as it allowed for a great flexibility in movement and rapid responses to events on the battlefield.

The Germans also enjoyed an advantage in manpower of at least 1.5:1, although in reality it was greater as Polish mobilisation was never really completed.

THE BIRTH OF BLITZKRIEG?

Germany wanted, and needed, a quick victory. With Britain and France declaring their support for Poland, the campaign would need to be fought and won before the western powers could react.

Believing they needed only to buy enough time for the French to mobilise and launch a massive offensive against Germany, Poland's entire strategy was flawed from the start. Compounding this flaw was the fact that France believed Poland would be able to hold out against the Nazi invasion for at least three months.

The Poles therefore called for an initial defence of their western territory, followed by a planned withdrawal to defensive positions along the River Vistula. Such a defence would not only signal that Poland was willing to fight (and therefore worthy of its promised support from France and Britain), but also give enough time for the mobilisation of its forces to be completed.

One of the forts that guarded the southern approach to Warsaw falls into German hands

© Getty Images

A child sits atop the wreckage of a bombed-out building in Warsaw

Image source: wiki/Julien Bryan

INVASION

Warsaw was a target from day one. The Luftwaffe was tasked with bombing the city, but weather conditions on 1 September were far from ideal and the spirited defence of the Brygada Poscigowa, the 'Pursuit Brigade', took the German airmen by surprise. The majority of Poland's squadrons had been allocated to support its various field armies, but the 54 planes of the Pursuit Brigade, mostly obsolete PZL P.11 fighters, downed 16 Luftwaffe aircraft on the first day of the invasion. Losses in the Polish Air Force (PAF) were catastrophic, however, and against the Germans' vastly superior Messerschmitt Bf 109 and the newly introduced Bf 110, as well as defensive fire from bombers, the PAF was to lose around 85 per cent of its aircraft during the short war.

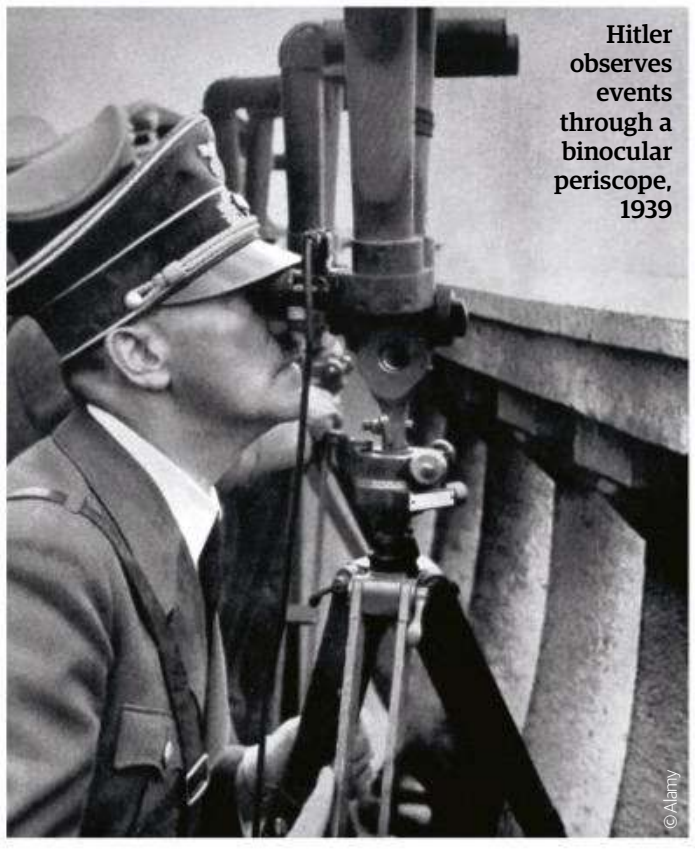
Relatively slow, the 340 Stukas of the Luftwaffe revelled in the open skies above Poland, attacking lines of communication, trains, railway lines and other key tactical targets at will and becoming in many ways the symbol of blitzkrieg. However, coordination between the panzer and infantry divisions was patchy and the Poles were enjoying success with their 37mm anti-tank weapons, even employing obsolescent armoured trains effectively.

WARSAW UNDER ATTACK

Following the confusion of the early days of the war, the Germans began to make serious advances. Most worrying for the defending Poles was that they were unable to retreat as quickly as the Germans were advancing. Pressure on two Polish armies, Army Lodz and Army Prusy, resulted in a gap developing between them wide enough for the Germans to race through. By the afternoon of 7 September, elements of 1st and 4th Panzer Divisions had reached Warsaw.

By now, Luftwaffe raids were having more of an effect, and the rubble of destroyed buildings dotted the landscape. Distressing though this was for the civilian population, it actually helped with the preparation of defences – the bombed-out buildings provided excellent cover for the placement of anti-tank guns and artillery. In addition, ditches were dug, rail lines ripped up and planted into the ground to form rudimentary tank traps, and barricades built. Trams were toppled over to block roads.

On 8 September the ominous rumbling of advancing tanks began to build as the first units of 4th Panzer Division advanced cautiously into a hostile and unfamiliar environment. The tanks, mostly Type I and II panzers, were thinly armoured and unable to withstand anything more substantial than machine-gun fire. Many of 4th Panzer Division's tanks were destroyed before the attack was called off.



Hitler observes events through a binocular periscope, 1939

© Alamy

The evening before, the Polish commander, Edward Rydz-Śmigły (who had defended Warsaw from the Bolsheviks in 1920), had taken a fateful decision. Convinced that Warsaw was about to be surrounded by the rapidly advancing Germans, he ordered the bulk of the army command apparatus to relocate to Brzesc-nad-Bugiem (Brest-Litovsk). At the worst possible moment, with its armies reeling under the German onslaught, the Polish command structure disintegrated.

The tanks of 4th Panzer Division attacked again on 9 September, but were again repulsed. Polish defences had been strengthened overnight and the 'Children of Warsaw Brigade' had been recalled to the city, launching a series of small night-time raids to keep the Germans off balance.

THE POLISH COUNTERATTACK

One area in which blitzkrieg left the Germans vulnerable was in their susceptibility to counterattacks on their exposed flanks. As their divisions raced along as fast as they could, it was inevitable that some would become strung out. And just such a situation had arisen...

The German Eighth Army was the target, blissfully unaware of the danger as intelligence had mistakenly reported Army Poznań retreating to Warsaw. As evening approached on 9 September, three Polish infantry divisions, flanked by two

cavalry brigades, attacked two German infantry divisions along the River Bzura. After 24 hours of fighting, the Germans were forced to withdraw and around 1,500 men were taken prisoner.

It was a small victory, but it achieved its primary goal – that of buying time for the defences of Warsaw to be strengthened and for more units to make it safely back to the city. The good news for Warsaw was, of course, bad news for Army Poznań, which was quickly surrounded.

On 16 September the Luftwaffe sent 820 planes against the trapped Poles in the 'Bzura pocket', who were also being pummelled by artillery fire while panzer forces closed in. The end was inevitable, and although some units did manage to break through a weak spot in the German cordon, Army Poznań was virtually annihilated. Around 120,000 men were taken prisoner.

THE SIEGE OF WARSAW

Warsaw was a city of 1.3 million inhabitants, including the largest Jewish population outside New York – 350,000 Jews called Warsaw home, and most were to suffer a horrendous fate in the years that followed the German capture of the city.

The belief that France would quickly launch an offensive on the opening of the war had not only misled the Poles, it had also hampered German planning. Unwilling to have its forces committed too far to the east in case they needed to respond quickly to a French attack, German commanders had been tentative about crossing the River Vistula. By the middle of September, reality was dawning – the French were not about to move quickly and the armies engaged in Poland were free to roam at will. Army Group North, commanded by Fedor von Bock, was therefore able to move southwards on both sides of the Vistula, posing a much more serious threat to the Polish defensive positions. Third Army was in the vanguard as German units again pushed down towards Warsaw.

The Polish plan was still to hang on until help arrived from France, so keeping field armies intact was of paramount importance. On the same day that Rydz-Śmigły had shifted the Polish command centre from Warsaw, he had issued an ominous order – men within a certain age range were also to leave the city. The inevitable conclusion was that Warsaw was being left to its fate. The order was so frightening, in fact, that it was ignored, with the general in charge of the defence of Warsaw, Walerian Czuma, agreeing with the city's mayor, Stefan Starzyński, that the men were needed to defend the city.

Posters appeared throughout the city, urging the citizens to arms ("Do Broni!") and declaring that Warsaw would be defended to the last man. Retreating units were finding their way into the city and there was little doubt that events were reaching their critical point.

The city was not yet surrounded, however. German forces were closing in from the north, but to the west, the Bzura counter-attack was still tying

POLAND

Image source: wiki/Library of Congress

EDWARD RYDZ-ŚMIGŁY

The marshal of Poland and commander-in-chief of Poland's armed forces made his name in the Polish Legions during WWI and in the Polish-Soviet War that immediately followed. He gambled on Poland's western allies coming to their aid against Germany, but this never happened. He escaped Poland for Romania and played a role in the creation of the Polish Underground.

Image source: wiki/fotohistoria.pl

TADEUSZ KUTRZEBA

The major general of the Polish Army was in command of Army Poznań, which took part in the Battle of Bzura, holding off the German forces long enough for other Polish units to withdraw into Warsaw. Kutrzeba was in Warsaw himself from 22 September and was ultimately tasked with beginning surrender negotiations as it became clear they could not hold out any longer.

GERMANY

Image source: wiki/Deutsches Bundesarchiv

FEDOR VON BOCK

As commander of Army Group North for the invasion of Poland, he led the annihilation of Polish forces north of the Vistula. He also ordered that, should they be fired upon by nearby villages behind their lines, they should burn them to the ground. He later commanded Army Group B for the invasion of France.

Image source: wiki/Deutsches Bundesarchiv

GERD VON RUNDSTEDT

Having retired in 1938 at the rank of generaloberst, Rundstedt was recalled as commander of Army Group South for the invasion of Poland. His arrival at the Battle of Bzura helped to turn the tide in Germany's favour, leading to the Warsaw siege. He went on to be involved in the invasions of France and Russia.

Image source: wiki/Jagiellońska Biblioteka Cyfrowa

JOHANNES BLASKOWITZ

Ultimately becoming commander-in-chief of Occupied Poland, Blaskowitz commanded the 8th Army, which saw some of the heaviest fighting during the Battle of Bzura. He notably opposed war crimes perpetrated by the SS and even sentenced convicted SS officers to death (although Hitler countermanded these orders).

up German forces. To the south, there was hope in the form of four fortifications: Forts Szczesliwicki, Mokotowski, Dabrowski and Czerniakowski. The forts were old, though, and Mokotowski had been partially dismantled in preparation for being converted to a storage facility. They were a comforting presence for the civilian population, but they could not hope to hold back German tanks, artillery and infantry for long.

THE FALL

The end for Warsaw came quickly. As the Bzura counter-attack fizzled out, German forces completed the encirclement of the city by 21 September, committing 12 divisions to the task. The short, sharp lessons learned by the panzer forces in the earlier street fighting had helped persuade the German command that the capture of the city would be best left in the hands of the artillery and Luftwaffe. A thousand guns were amassed around Warsaw to pummel the city into submission, while the air force continued its bombing raids.

On 23 September, a major assault was beaten back by the desperate Polish defenders, but two days later resistance appeared futile in the face of a huge artillery bombardment, accompanied by bombing raids involving 1,200 planes. Warsaw disappeared under a pall of smoke, which actually made it difficult for Luftwaffe planes to spot their targets, resulting in numerous 'friendly fire' casualties among German ground units.

The forts to the south of the city fell the next day, after determined infantry assaults. Fort Mokotowski, home to the Polish Broadcasting Station, had kept transmitting up to the 25th despite being repeatedly targeted from above by German bombers.

Resistance was still an option, as fresh reserves of ammunition had been transported into the city via locomotive, but the cost of defending the city was becoming too high.

THE AFTERMATH

As many as 40,000 civilians died during the savage siege of Warsaw. Following its capture, the Jewish population was to suffer most at the hands of the German occupiers, first forced to live in a cramped ghetto (where an estimated 83,000 would die of disease and starvation) and later transported to death camps for more organised extermination.

The Molotov-Ribbentrop pact, signed just before the opening of the war, on 23 August, had called for the partition of Poland between Germany and the Soviet Union. The Soviet army was badly led and organised, but it did not need to do much more than occupy the territory allotted to it under the secret terms of the pact – Poland had shifted almost all its forces to the west to face the Germans. The two enormous armies, unaware that they would shortly be pitted against each other, calmly divided Poland between themselves.

The cost of defeat for Warsaw was immense. At the end of World War II, when Soviet forces 'liberated' the city, they would find a population of just 174,000.

1-27 SEPT 1939

01 The Luftwaffe strikes

On the first day of the war, the Luftwaffe bombs Warsaw, but determined defence from the two squadrons of the Polish 'Pursuit Brigade' (which shot down 42 German planes in the first six days of the war), along with bad weather, limits the effectiveness of these initial air raids.

02 The Polish command withdraws

Fearing that an encirclement of Warsaw is inevitable, Polish commander Edward Rydz-Śmigły orders the removal of the Polish command headquarters, sparking a temporary panic in the city.

03 The panzers arrive

On 7 September, German tanks arrive on the southern outskirts of the city. The following day they push into the suburbs at Ochota, but are repulsed by anti-tank and artillery fire. The panzers are then withdrawn to help deal with a Polish counter-attack.

04 The northern approach

By 15 September the Germans are back, this time approaching the city from the north, along both banks of the River Vistula. The suburb of Praga, on the east bank, is the focus of the assault.

05 The flight of Army Poznań

Having staged a brave but doomed counter-attack, the remnants of Army Poznań fights its way into Warsaw. The attack has bought precious days for the organisation of defences in the city, but the situation is increasingly desperate.

06 Black Monday

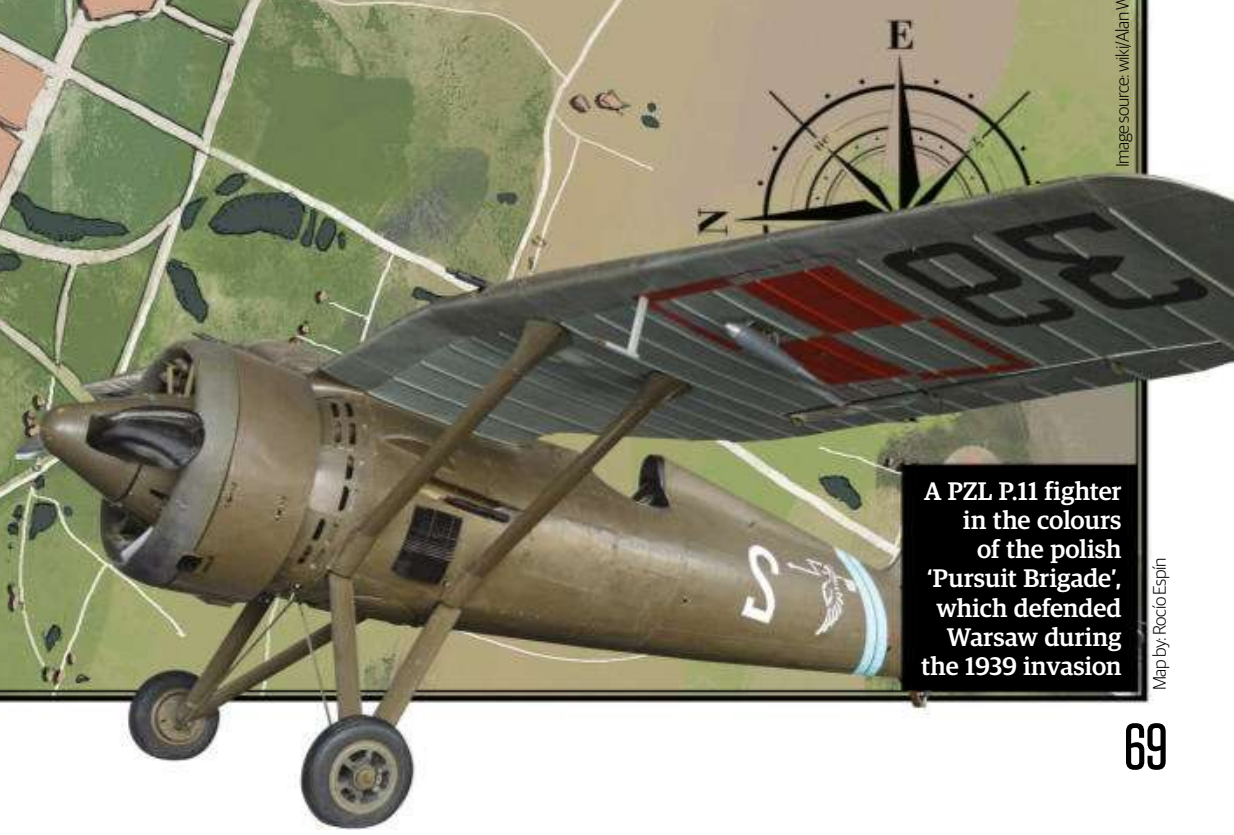
The city is surrounded by 12 German divisions. On 25 September a huge artillery bombardment, along with bombing raids by 1,200 Luftwaffe planes, rocks the city.

07 Fall of the forts

A string of obsolescent forts to the south of the city, which offer more comfort to the civilian population than concern for the Germans, are overwhelmed by infantry assaults on 26 September. The southern route into Warsaw lies open.

08 The final surrender

With Hitler ordering that no civilians are to be allowed to leave the city, Polish commanders recognise the pointlessness of further resistance. On the evening of 26 September talks open with the Germans and the city surrenders the following day.



A PZL P.11 fighter in the colours of the polish 'Pursuit Brigade', which defended Warsaw during the 1939 invasion

Image source: wiki/Alan Wilson

Map by: Rocío Espín

What If...

GENGHIS KHAN HAD BEEN ASSASSINATED?

An attempt on the Mongol leader's life in 1200 could have changed the course of history

Written by Jonny O'Callaghan

INTERVIEW WITH

JOHN MAN

John Man is an author who specialises in the history of Central Asia, particularly Mongolia. His book *Genghis Khan*, published in 2005, explains the story of this fascinating figure.

©John Man

What was the background to this assassination attempt in 1200?
Genghis was born in 1162 and at this stage has not yet become Genghis Khan. He still has his childhood name of Temujin and he's emerging as the [leader] in a feudal society that is extremely self-destructive. These are the Mongolians, or the Mongols, divided into various clans. To the south is China's unified empire, and to the east is another tribe called the Tatars. There are other tribes around the outside. The whole place is pretty self-destructive. He has survived a childhood in which he was abandoned by his clan because his father had died. His mother looked after him, and he always respected women very much after this. He slowly worked his way upwards, as a result mainly of his character, and he was about to be elected leader of his clan. He was rivalling other clan leaders and tribes in the area, forming alliances where he could, and acting in a way which ensured his leadership.

What was Genghis Khan like as a leader?
He was an extraordinary character. This is a prime example of history being created by character. He was extremely generous to his followers; he was not brutally inquisitive in the way that other chiefs were. He won a battle against a major rival, his childhood friend Jamukha. Jamukha also had ambitions to be [leader], and broke from Genghis quite early in adult life and formed alliances of his own. At this moment Genghis was battling a coalition of tribes and clans, which didn't look all that good for him. He eventually emerged from it, and from this assassination attempt. It was more of a military alliance against him. It's all rather obscure; our only source is *The Secret History Of The Mongols* [written in the 13th century]. But because of his loyal followers, he was warned of this assassination attempt and survived. Some time after this [in 1206] he was crowned as head of the tribe, and founded as the head of his nation. And that's how he's remembered today.

Do we know much about the assassination attempt?
No. The rumours spread, and word came to him of this possible assassination. A shepherd overheard plotting in the other camp and came and warned him. He gathered his clan and changed camp, and there was a battle rather than an assassination attempt.

Who plotted the assassination?
It was a rival tribe that lived cheek by jowl with the Mongols. They interacted a lot, but they were still rivals for the heartland of Mongolia. They were called the Keraites, and the leader

© Alamy

RIGHT
Ultimately our view of the Mongol Empire would be very different today without Genghis Khan

Main image sources: © Alamy

THE PAST

c.1227

THE SECRET HISTORY OF THE MONGOLS

The oldest surviving text written in the Mongol language and a key source on the rise of Genghis Khan, *The Secret History Of The Mongols* is unique because it's written from a Mongol perspective. Written in the 13th century, the book is deemed 'secret' due to the fact that either only Mongols or members of the imperial family were allowed to read it. One of the reasons why it remains so interesting is that while a majority of historical texts are written with extreme bias, and this one is certainly favourable, it doesn't paint Genghis in a wholly positive light. For example, it includes him murdering his half-brother. Even when providing some less reliable information, the book remains a fascinating insight into the Mongols own view of their empire.

1206-27

GENGHIS' EMPIRE

At its peak the Mongol Empire covered some nine million square miles, from the Pacific Ocean in the east to the shores of the Persian Gulf in the west, and to date is still the largest contiguous land empire in history. The various military victories of Genghis Khan that led to the vast empire are often stated as being due to strategy and tactics as opposed to sheer numbers. Genghis was also adept at using propaganda, warning territories that he was on his way and offering to spare the populace if they surrendered ahead of time. During its time the empire was responsible for the destruction of entire civilisations, such as the Khwarezm.

Image source: wiki/ Ali Zifan

1227

WHERE'S GHENGIS?

Ghengis Khan died on 18 August 1227 while putting down a revolt in Xia Xia. Understanding that news of his death could have devastating consequences, he ordered that it be kept a secret. Anyone who spotted his funeral procession making its way to Khartoum was slaughtered and to this day his final resting place remains a mystery.

was a man called Toghrul, which means 'falcon'. He had become an ally of Genghis' father, so Toghrul was extremely anxious about not getting too involved in the killing of Genghis, but he was persuaded into it by his son, Senggüm, about whom we know extraordinarily little. The main drama is of Toghrul's great distress about being forced into a possible assassination attempt against, in effect, an adopted son.

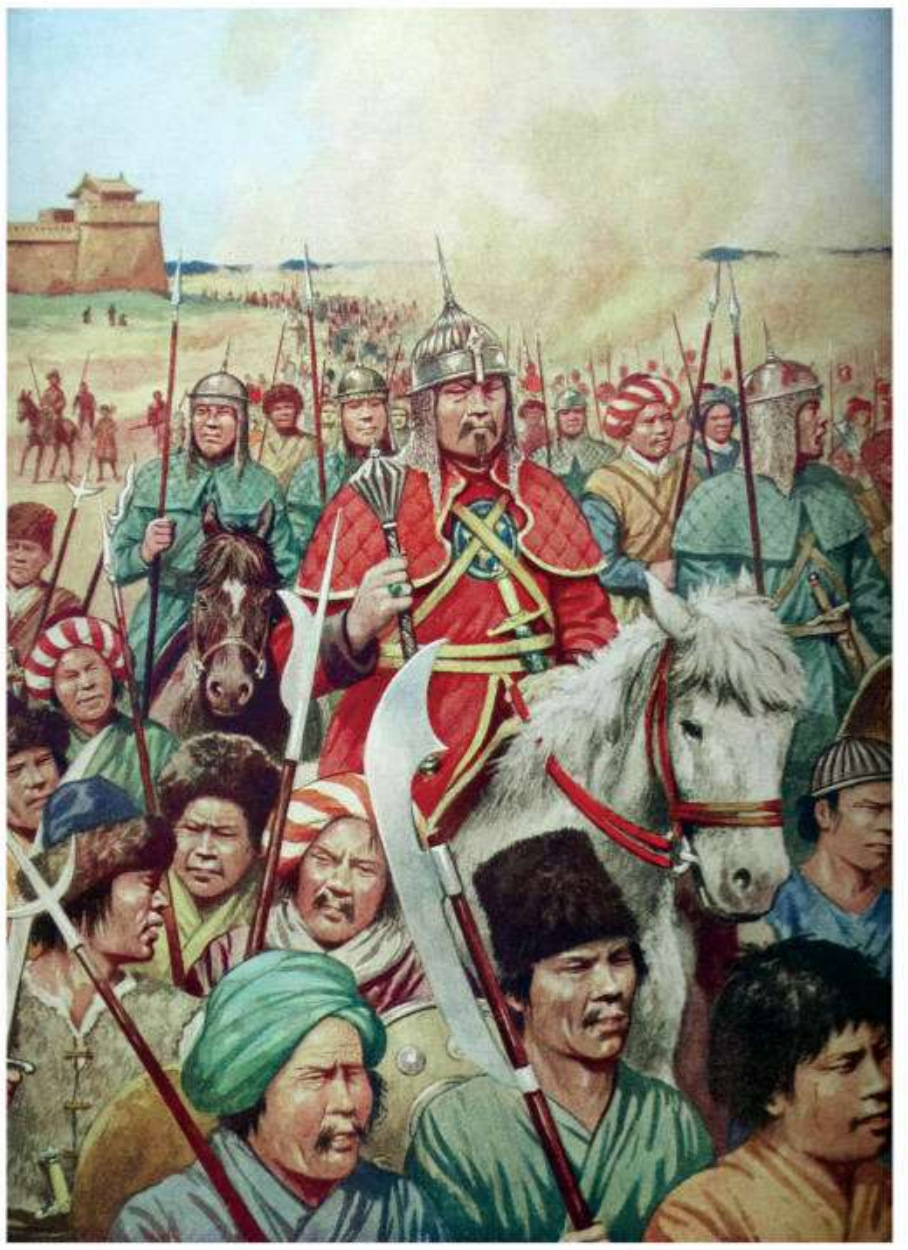
Why did this group want to assassinate Genghis?

Because there was always a lot of rivalry for land, cattle, and women on the steppe. Really the only way you could pay your followers was with cattle, land, and power or security. That was really the currency at the time. Toghrul himself lived near where the capital of Mongolia - Ulaanbaatar - is today. Genghis was a few dozen miles away to the east, in his own heartland. And there was continual back and forth trading, fighting, and feuding of all the tribes in the area. People were really surviving by the alliances that they could make.

What would have happened if he had been assassinated?

The best way to look at that is to see what would not have been achieved had he been killed. Soon after he became Khan, he invaded what is today north China, where there was another empire, and the south. At the same time he sent a trade mission to the far west, the world

LEFT Genghis was the only figure that was able to unify the Mongolian tribes

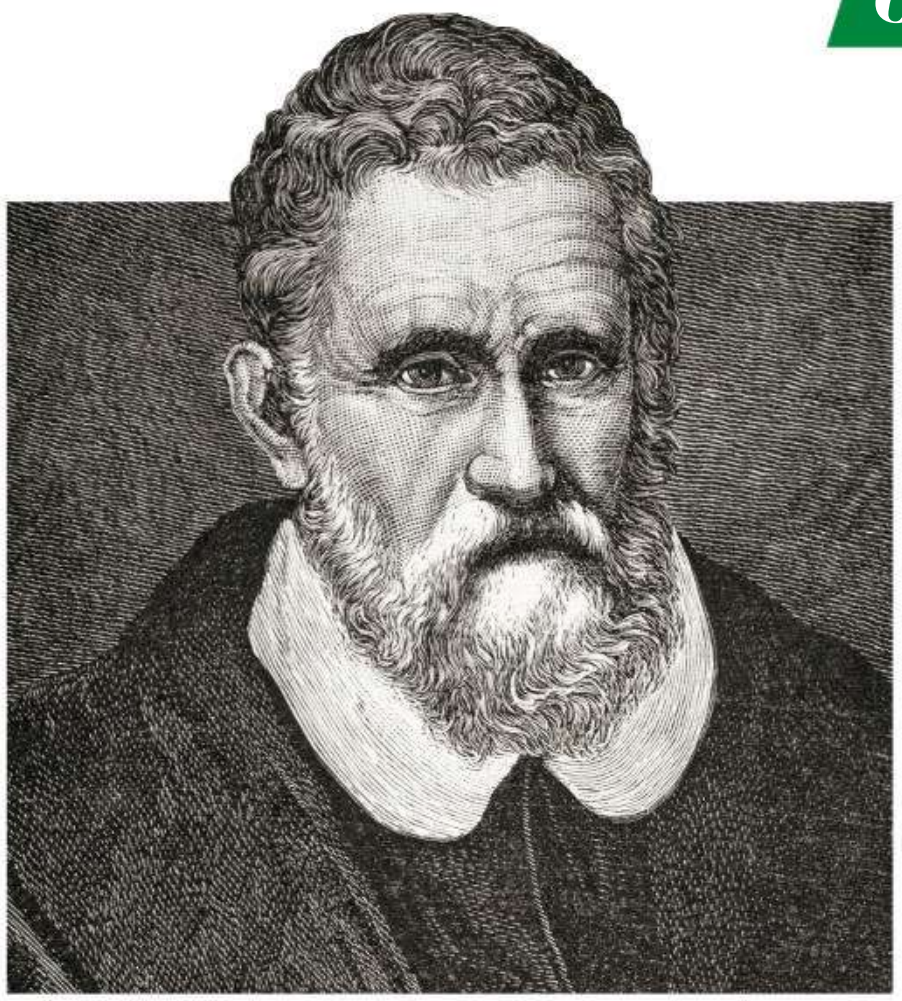


ABOVE Genghis and his followers established the largest land empire in history

of Islam, and that trade mission of 100 men was killed by the Persian Empire, way beyond the modern borders of China. He was so incensed by this that he turned from China, moved westwards, and invaded. The result of all this was he took over a good deal of Central Asia, from the north part of China to the Pacific, all the way across to the west into what is now Iran and Persia, and was on his way to invade north China again in 1227 when he fell ill and died.

What happened after his death?

The empire was inherited by his third son, Ögedei, who conceived the idea of total world rule. He said the world had been given to the Mongols by the Mongolian god, and they should show all other nations on Earth the Mongols were the natural rulers. This is the way the empire unfolded from there on into the 13th century by Genghis' grandson, Kublai Khan. The whole of China was taken and the Mongols reached the Mediterranean, which was the limit of their empire because that was where the grass ran out, and grass was the fuel on which their armies ran. So some 13 countries today cannot tell their history without reference to the Mongol Empire or to Genghis Khan. And that's what



"Nobody knows how many millions died as a result of Genghis Khan's invasions"

would have been lost to the world had he died in young adulthood. It is one of the most startling facts of human history that one family should have ruled a good deal of Asia and Eurasia, reaching ultimately to the gates of Vienna. It's quite extraordinary and it remains the largest land empire in history today.

Would we have seen an empire like this if Genghis had been successfully assassinated?
It wouldn't have existed. There would have been several large empires which would have endured. And I'm sure the tribes of Mongolia and Manchuria would have been set against each other, which was the Chinese policy to use barbarians against barbarians, and that's the way they would have remained. I can't see how any great personality would have [emerged] to unify them.

So there would be been no unity at all without the leadership of Genghis Khan?
You can see what happens at his death in 1227. He was just on the brink of invading north China, and the invasion stopped in its tracks simply because he died. There was nobody immediately to take over the military leadership and continue the advance he started. So you can imagine what would have happened if he hadn't been leader at all. There would have been no unity, and probably no nation of Mongolia today, certainly no empire. We would not have Kublai Khan. There would be no visit by Marco Polo to Kublai Khan [later in the 13th century]. There would probably be no great book of travels written by Polo. People would not have known of the stupendous wealth of China. They might even have not been inspired to travel westwards, as Columbus did [in the 15th century], to find the wealth of Kublai Khan, which had been spoken of by Polo. So the implications of Genghis dying young are in fact highly significant for the history of the world.

Given the amount of people Genghis Khan killed, would the world have been better off without him?
Nobody knows how many millions died as a result of his invasions. It's strange to say, but he was not a brutal or vindicative person. But he could achieve on a far greater level what everybody else would have achieved if they could. His organisation of his armies was astonishing. He co-opted his victims into his armed forces and used artists for the enrichment of his own people. And he certainly was responsible for an enormous amount of death. I worked out his invasion of the Islamic world probably resulted in three or four million deaths, simply in the Middle East. In China, nobody knows how many millions died as a result of the invasions and starvations that resulted. It was a holocaust spread over many years. They would have been spared. That would have been a blessing.

Ultimately, the world would have been a very different place without Genghis Khan?
I would say he was one of the most influential thinkers in the whole of human history. So the consequences of his non-existence would be incalculable.

ABOVE Without the Mongol Empire, explorers like Marco Polo might not have travelled to Asia to meet Kublai Khan

BELOW Christopher Columbus might not have sailed west in search of riches

4x ©Alamy

THE POSSIBILITY

1260-94

KUBLAI KHAN

The grandson of Genghis Khan, Kublai is often viewed as his greatest successor. His achievements include the unification of China, which had been divided since the end of the Tang Dynasty. His ruling of China was something Genghis had never been able to achieve and he proved himself a shrewd politician as well as emperor. Had Genghis been assassinated, this consolidation would never have occurred.

1271

MARCO POLO

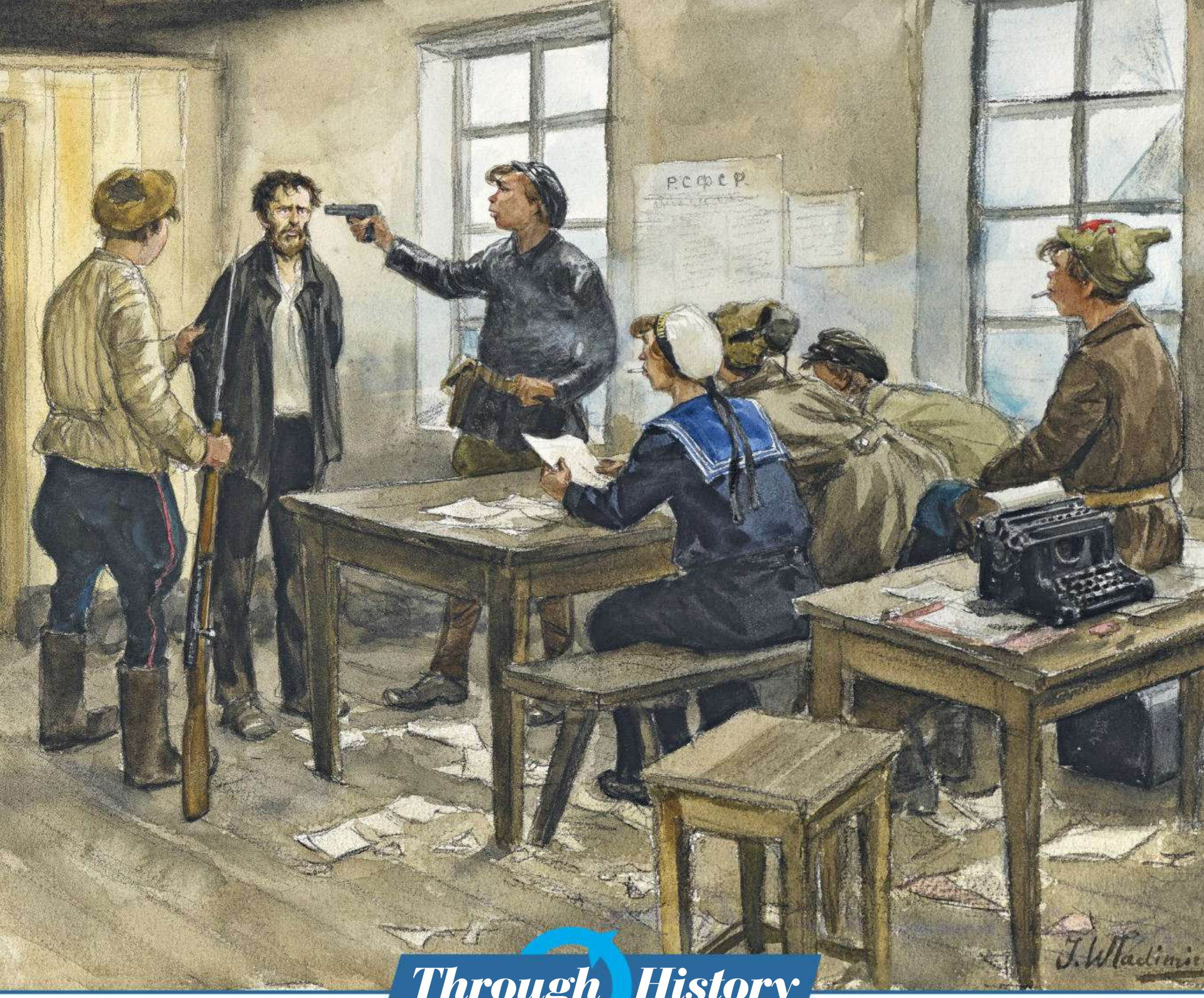
The Travels Of Marco Polo has become something of a 'boy's own' favourite. Adapted numerous times, these exotic tales of adventure and excitement still capture the imagination and have proven incredibly influential. Among a variety of subjects the book most famously details Polo's journey's along the Silk Road, which he embarked upon with his brothers in 1271. The trip took Polo some 24 years, much of which was spent in China. Upon first being transcribed, the book quickly spread throughout the Italian peninsula, with numerous copies made. This was pre-printing press era and while we remember the book now for its adventure and daring, at the time it was an important insight into Eastern culture. The book's influence on travel and trade was enormous and without Genghis Khan it is doubtful there would have been a Marco Polo.

Image source: wiki/ Historia N°764 - Août 2010, Page 98

1206-27

VICTIMS OF THE KHAN

Exact figures surrounding the number of deaths that Genghis Khan can be held accountable for vary wildly and it's impossible to ever know for sure. However, various historians put the figure at around 40 million. Some sources state that in one case the slaughter was so great that it took 12 days to count the dead. Had Genghis Khan be assassinated at an early age, countless men, women and children would have been saved instead of just those he deemed to be 'useful' to him and his empire.



Through History

ART OF THE REVOLUTION

Ivan Vladimirov portrayed the Bolshevik uprising in unflinching detail

All images: © Ivan Vladimirov, provided by Unicorn Publishing

Almost unheard of in the West, the works of Ivan Vladimirov are striking contemporary depictions of the Russian Revolution. Born in 1869 to an English mother and a Russian father, Vladimirov's mother was a painter and we can assume it was from her he first developed a love for the craft. He became interested in a career as a professional illustrator, reporting from war zones for newspapers and journals. As such Vladimirov was as much a journalist as a painter. He gave his paintings simple titles that describe exactly what they portray and often include the place and date, for example: *Wrecking A Foodshop In Petrograd In February 1917.*

This use of direct titles is partly explained by the role of Vladimirov's paintings, which were used primarily as informative works as opposed to art to be admired. In the West, newspapers published his depictions of looting and disorder to present a country in chaos, and they were astoundingly effective at doing so. During the Revolution Vladimirov sought to portray both sides of the conflict as fairly as possible, which led to many of the paintings being secretly exported out of the country. Unicorn Publishing's upcoming book *Russia Accursed: Red Terror Through The Eyes Of The Artist Ivan Vladimirov* contains 160 of his images, giving us a new perspective on the Russian Revolution.

VANDALISM OF THE REVOLUTIONARIES

When Bolshevik troops stormed the Winter Palace, the destruction was extreme. The library of Alexander III was ransacked, with its contents and state papers destroyed. This painting from Vladimirov depicts the destruction of numerous works of art.

REQUISITIONING BANK NOTES FROM WAWELBERG BANK

This image portrays the seizing of bank notes by Bolshevik troops. Following World War I, Russia suffered from chronic hyperinflation but the problem was only made worse by an attempt to abolish money altogether. Following the disaster this caused, the Soviet ruble was issued.

LOOTING THE ESTATE OF AN ARISTOCRAT

When the Bolsheviks seized power, many of Russia's old aristocratic families were attacked and their possessions taken. Lenin encouraged this practice, famously proclaiming that they should "loot the looters". This image portrays the looting of an aristocratic home.

CUTTING UP A DEAD HORSE FOR FOOD

Following the Revolution in 1917, Russia endured years of disease and famine. Between 1918-26 an estimated 14 million civilians are said to have died, the majority in 1918-22. This painting depicts starving people cutting meat from a dead horse in the street – an all-too-common scene during those days of unimaginable hardship.

REQUISITION OF VALUABLES FROM THE CHURCH

The Bolsheviks waged a long and unforgiving campaign against the church, confiscating valuable ecclesiastical property. As famine ravaged the country many people turned against the church, which they saw as hoarding Russia's wealth.

LOUNGING REVOLUTIONARY SOLDIER

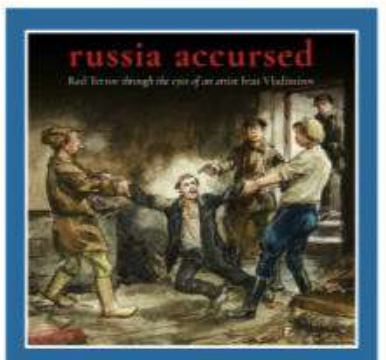
An example of Vladimirov's lighter and more humorous side, this picture shows a revolutionary soldier lounging in an expensive armchair – almost certainly looted. The irony and wry comedy presents an image vastly different to the artist's darker portrayals of the Revolution.

EXECUTION AT DNO RAIL STATION IN 1919

Nine months after the October Revolution, attempts were made on the lives of Lenin and Moisei Uritsky (Petrogad's secret-police chief). The result was the Red Terror, a vicious Bolshevik campaign that sought to wipe out their enemies once and for all. Officially, the policy ended in November 1918, by which time some 10-15,000 executions had taken place.

AT THE PIANO

Following the ransacking of aristocratic homes and wealthy landlords, Vladimirov twice painted images of children in barns playing with looted grand pianos. Showing another side to his skills these paintings appear bright and cheerful, with an undercurrent of childish mischief.



Russia Accursed: Red Terror Through The Eyes Of The Artist Ivan Vladimirov

by Andre Ruzhnikov from Unicorn is out on 21 January (£40)

REVIEWS

The books, TV shows and films causing a stir in the history world this month

Image source: Netflix

THE CROWN SEASON 4

The show delivers a gripping fight between tradition and change

Creator: Peter Morgan **Distributor:** Netflix **Cast:** Olivia Colman, Gillian Anderson, Emma Corrin **Released:** Out now

Season 4 of *The Crown*, set during the premiership of Margaret Thatcher from 1979 to 1990, is arguably the most anticipated one to date. Covering events such as the assassination of Lord Mountbatten by the IRA and the Falklands War, creator Peter Morgan has taken creative liberties with history, just like in previous seasons.

Of course, one of the biggest storylines is the marriage of Prince Charles (Josh O'Connor) and Princess Diana (Emma Corrin). Under pressure to marry a 'sweet and innocent' girl who will follow the rules of the royal family, Charles proposes to Diana as the woman he really loves – Camilla Parker-Bowles – is out of the question.

Charles and Diana walk down the aisle with their romance publicly celebrated as a modern-day fairy tale, but privately it is obvious that this mismatched couple are doomed. Princess Margaret even tries to warn Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip (Olivia Colman and Tobias Menzies) about this before the wedding, stating: "How many times can this family make the same mistake?" – a warning that goes unheeded.

Nervous and out of her depth as a new royal, Diana fails to get the recognition or affection she seeks from her new family, who are unaccustomed to emotional displays. In fact, when she attempts to tell the Queen about her unhappiness, she's met with cold indifference.

The fragile marriage deteriorates as an overshadowed Charles becomes jealous of the spotlight on his wife, who becomes increasingly confident in the public eye. It's almost impossible not to pick sides, with much of the sympathy developed for Charles in the previous season dissipating as he wallows in self pity.

This season also sees the arrival of Thatcher, played by a brilliant Gillian Anderson – although her gravelly voice makes it sound like she will die at any moment. Thatcher shines best in her scenes with the Queen as their awkward relationship and differing approaches to politics are explored.

This is highlighted best in an episode where they clash over imposing sanctions, which the Queen supports and Thatcher does not, on the apartheid of South Africa. But by the time Thatcher is ousted from office it's clear that they respect one another as two extraordinary women devoted to their jobs and country.

For the Queen, Diana and Thatcher challenge her determination to stick to tradition both personally and professionally, despite the social and political changes occurring in Britain. In comparison to them, the Queen is restrained and out of touch, something made painfully clear when Michael Fagan breaks into her bedroom at Buckingham Palace, desperate to tell her about the dire state of the economy.

This season is undoubtedly the most critical of the royal family so far, highlighting the reoccurring theme that many of their problems and failures are self-inflicted. ***JL***

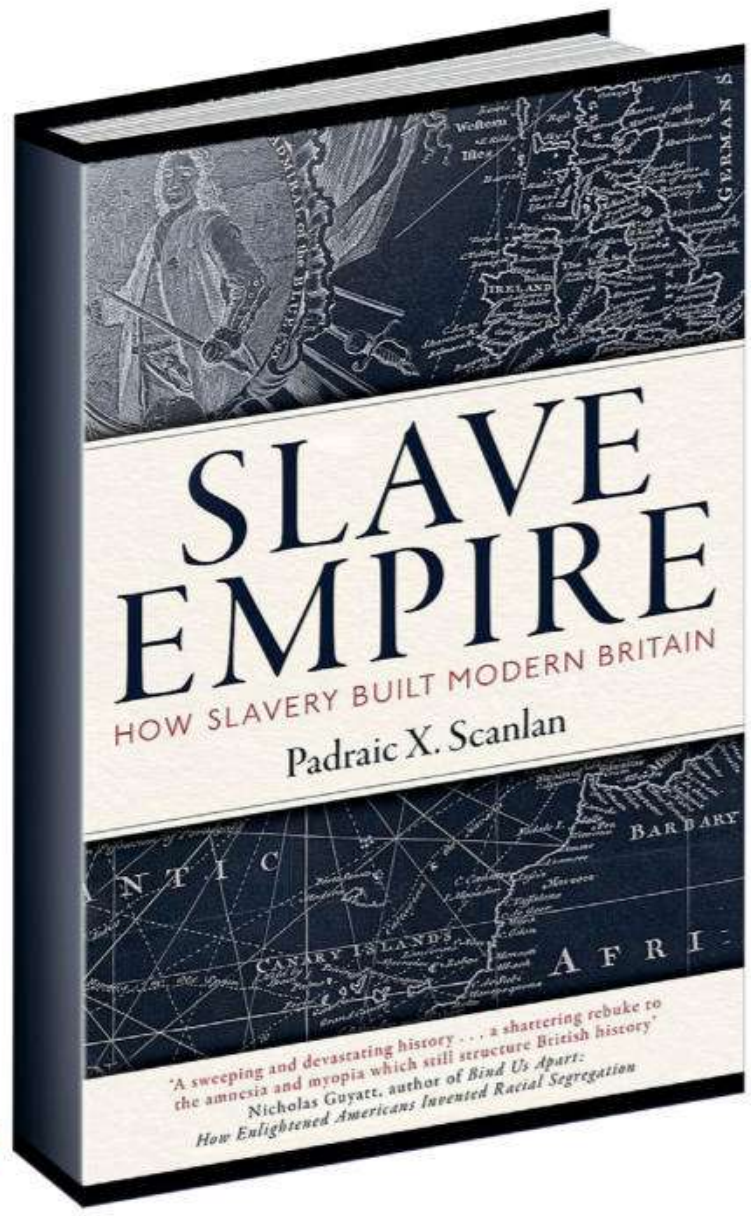
★★★★☆

Reviews by
Jessica Leggett, Catherine Curzon

SLAVE EMPIRE

A compelling and devastating examination of how slavery built Britain

Author Padraic X Scanlan **Publisher** Little, Brown Book Group
Price £25 **Released** Out now


SLAVE EMPIRE
HOW SLAVERY BUILT MODERN BRITAIN
Padraic X. Scanlan
'A sweeping and devastating history . . . a shattering rebuke to the amnesia and myopia which still structure British history'
Nicholas Guyatt, author of Bind Us Apart: How Enlightened Americans Invented Racial Segregation

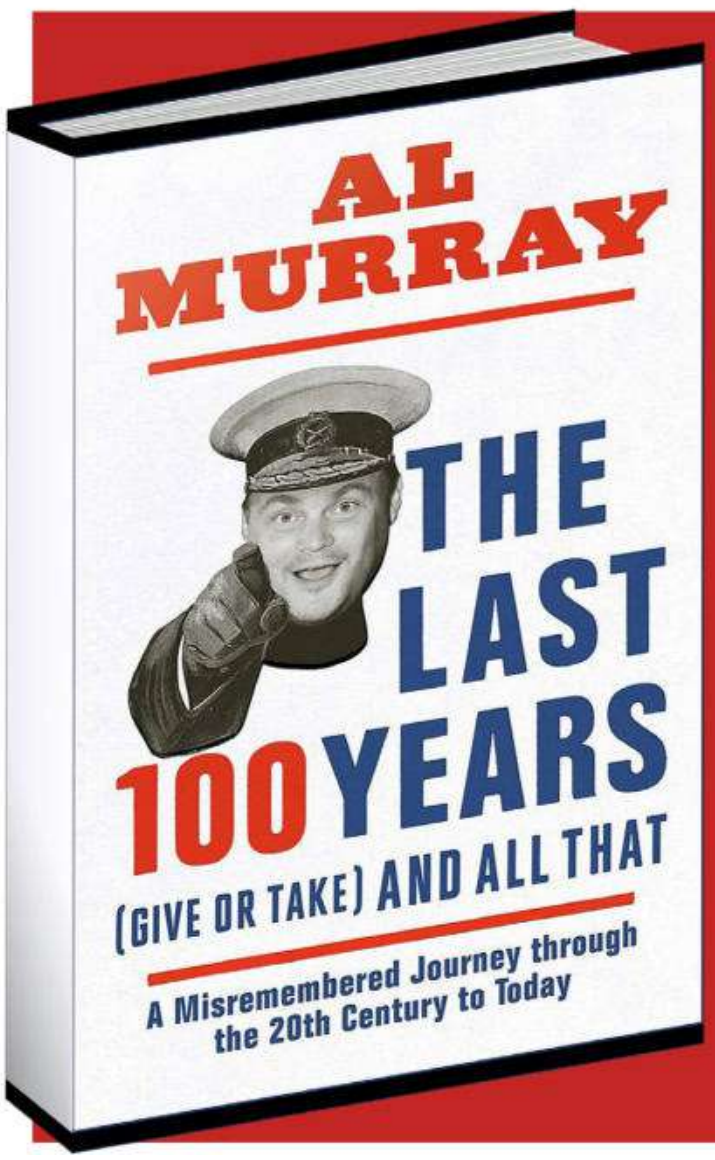
In this hard-hitting, authoritative new work, Dr Padraic X Scanlan argues that the oft-repeated claim that the British Empire was built on freedom is a myth. To the contrary, *Slave Empire: How Slavery Built Modern Britain* posits that the British Empire was built not on freedom and liberty but on the barbaric practice of slavery.

Slave Empire places enslaved people at the very heart of the growth of the empire through the 18th and 19th century, examining how the fortunes of the nation flourished at the cost of tens of thousands of lives. Scanlan's exhaustive research, sensitive prose and unflinching analysis pushes aside the sentimentality of the Victorian era to demonstrate that abolition created a false belief for Victorian Britons that they were ushering in a new dawn of liberalism and freedom, when in fact those much-vaunted freedoms found their roots in centuries of slavery.

This is a powerful, often devastating, always compelling examination of a changing world. It is, crucially, rooted in the human stories that can so often be lost in the sweep of historical insight. Scanlan brings together a vast field of recent scholarship to create a fascinating tapestry in which history isn't a series of finite eras but an intertwined, complex tangle that is written and rewritten constantly, even as it's happening.

Readable and compelling, Scanlan navigates his enormous global canvas with aplomb. His authoritative book lingers with the reader long after the final page. ***CC***

★★★★★



THE LAST 100 YEARS AND ALL THAT

An entertaining jaunt through 100 years of history

Author Al Murray **Publisher** Quercus **Price** £14.99 **Released** Out now

For those who know Al Murray as his Pub Landlord alter ego, *The Last 100 Years And All That* might come as something of a surprise. Yet Murray studied Modern History at Oxford in his pre-Pub Landlord days, and his passion for the past means that this is more than just a celebrity stocking filler.

The title of the book is a nod to the 1930 classic *1066 And All That*, and just as that book managed to balance irreverent humour with genuine historical insight, so too does Murray carry off that delicate balancing act. Billed as a "whistle-stop tour of Britain since 1914", the book actually concludes in 1999, while its scope spans the globe and reaches all the way to the Moon.

How much readers will enjoy this book may well depend on their response to Murray's particular brand of humour, not to mention its conversational tone. Yet that tone feels just right and though there are moments of sheer absurdity - Benedict Cumberbatch creating the Enigma machine springs to mind - the history is solid. It's not quite the collection of lesser-known vignettes that the jacket promises, though, and for every intriguing aside there are plenty of big ticket moments, from two World Wars to the death of Diana, Princess of Wales.

There is much to enjoy here and *The Last 100 Years And All That* will no doubt serve as a wonderful primer for casual readers who are looking to dip their toes into the history of the 20th century. ***CC***

★★★★½

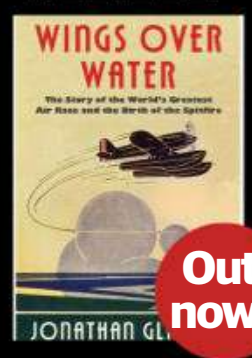
Book of the Inca

From a small tribe in the shadow of the Andes to the undisputed masters of South America, the *Book of the Inca* tracks the evolution of this incredible civilisation. With its divine emperors, sprawling empire of 10 million people, marvels of engineering, and the tale of how it all came crashing down, there is much to learn from this fascinating new special.

Out now!

Buy the *Book of the Inca* in shops or online at **magazinesdirect.com**
Price: £15.99

HISTORY of WAR **RECOMMENDS...**



Wings Over Water

Author Jonathan Glancey
Price £20 **Publisher** Atlantic Books

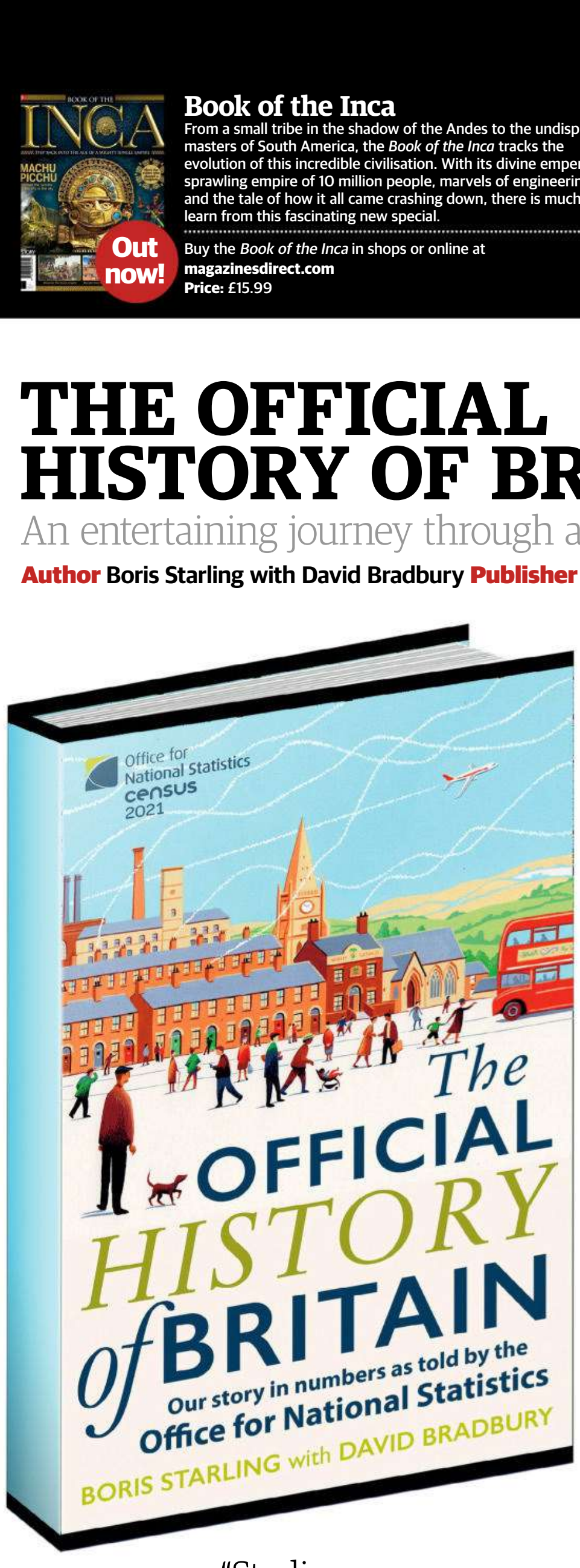
Created in 1912 by French industrialist Jacques Schneider, the Schneider Trophy international air contests led to 20 years of incredible aircraft and engine development. This wonderful book is written with an enthusiasm for the subject that bursts from every page. Jonathan Glancey charts the wider development of aviation before and after the races, examining the influences on the trophy and the people and equipment involved.

Out now!

THE OFFICIAL HISTORY OF BRITAIN

An entertaining journey through a statistical history of the UK

Author Boris Starling with David Bradbury **Publisher** HarperCollins **Price** £14.99 **Released** Out now


Office for National Statistics
census 2021
The OFFICIAL HISTORY of BRITAIN
Our story in numbers as told by the Office for National Statistics
BORIS STARLING with DAVID BRADBURY

"Starling weaves the statistics into a jaunty narrative"

If the words entertaining and statistics don't seem like natural bedfellows, prepare to be surprised by *The Official History Of Britain*, whose mission statement is clearly set out in its wordy subtitle: *Our story in numbers as told by the Office for National Statistics*. For the last two centuries the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and its predecessors have surveyed the nation, carrying out the census and supplementary research to record the changing face of Great Britain.

The Official History Of Britain is a greatest hits of the ONS' findings but it isn't a dry list of stats and figures. Instead author Boris Starling analyses and interprets the data to chart the shaping of modern Britain, demonstrating how our social and cultural landscape have changed over two tumultuous centuries. It is sensibly structured into five sections, covering who we are, which roughly examines how families, households and ambitions have changed; what we do, or the evolution of the job market from the Industrial Revolution to the technologically-savvy modern era; before moving on to an examination of where we live, delving into the country as a whole and the impact of population density. It concludes with a look at the 1921 census, before flashing forward to predict how the 2021 census might look.

It won't come as a surprise to learn that this book is absolutely packed with statistics courtesy of co-author David Bradbury, and Starling weaves them into a jaunty narrative. *The Official History Of Britain* isn't a particularly slim book, but it is a very easy read and filled with illuminating nuggets of British history. It will be of particular interest to casual historians of Great Britain, and for aficionados of social history it will likely be a treasure trove. Even the casual reader with a passing interest will likely find plenty to enjoy. It's a book that can be dipped into by anyone looking for a quick historical fix.

The Official History Of Britain isn't just a look back at the past, though. Instead it's as current as can be, particularly with its examination of the 1918-19 Spanish Flu pandemic versus the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic. Wisely, Starling doesn't attempt to predict in any detail what the latter might mean for the future, leaving that to future historians. All of this is supported through the ONS statistics, which illustrate the text. If there is one negative, it's that some of the visual material – charts, graphs and such like – is very small indeed. While this won't be such an issue in an electronic format, some readers may struggle to make out the very small labels and annotations in the print edition.

Though thoroughly entertaining, this is also a surprisingly thought-provoking book and it's fascinating to learn about the changing fortunes and makeup of the nation as families change, industries shrink while others expand, and the population diversifies. *The Official History Of Britain* will find readers across a broad spectrum, from keen local historians to devotees of statistics and the more casual fan of British history. ***CC***

★★★★☆

HISTORY VS HOLLYWOOD

Fact versus fiction on the silver screen

RESISTANCE

Director: Jonathan Jakubowicz **Starring:** Jesse Eisenberg, Clémence Poésy, Matthias Schweighöfer **Country:** France **Released:** 2020

How accurate is this film about Marcel Marceau during WWII?

VERDICT: A formulaic film that wastes a powerful, real story

01 Early in the film General Patton introduces Marcel Marceau for a performance in the Kongresshalle of Nuremberg in 1945. Marceau was a liaison officer for Patton, but his first performance was in 1944 in the newly liberated Paris in front of 3,000 US troops.

02 As we're introduced to Marceau he's already performing in cabaret clubs, much to the dismay of his butcher father. Pre-war, Marcel would've been only 15 compared to Jesse Eisenberg's 36 – a significant difference. He wouldn't get into miming until later.

03 Marceau teams up with Jewish activists Emma and Mila who are looking after Jewish orphans from Germany in Strasbourg. Both characters are invented, which seems all the more strange when they become the focus of a great deal of suffering later.

04 The primary villain is Klaus Barbie, the real-life 'Butcher of Lyon'. While the film seems to depict his actions accurately, his post in Lyon is 400km away from where Marceau mainly operated in Limoges and they would never have met despite what the film shows.

05 Finally, *Resistance* shows the main contribution of Marceau, which was sneaking Jewish children across the Alps into Switzerland. It's said he used his mime skills to distract them and keep them quiet to avoid detection, which the film shows in the last act.

Main image: © Alamy
5x inset image source: Vertigo Releasing

LAU LAU

Ingredients

- 450g pork shoulder
- 450g black cod (butterfish)
- 220g carrots, shredded (optional)
- 30 taro (luau) leaves
- 12 large ti leaves
- 1 tbsp sea salt
- Rubber bands, string or toothpicks (to tie lau lau into parcels)

Did you know?

The Hawaiian word 'lau' translates to 'leaf' in English

Main image: © Alamy
Inset image: © Getty Images

TRADITIONAL NATIVE HAWAIIAN CUISINE, HAWAII, PRE-19TH CENTURY – PRESENT

Lau lau is a simple but popular dish from Hawaii that is usually served as part of a plate lunch. The key ingredient is taro leaves, a staple of the Hawaiian diet. The taro plant was once so crucial to survival on the island that according to myth it was considered by the Hawaiians to be the elder brother of humans. There are many different versions of lau lau, but a classic lau lau is a combination of chicken, pork and salted black cod (also known as butterfish) wrapped in layers of taro (luau) leaves and ti leaves and steamed for several hours. While lau lau is traditionally cooked in an underground oven called an imu, we have chosen a recipe that allows you to make it without one!

METHOD

01 To prepare the taro and ti leaves, start by washing them thoroughly. Remove the centre stems from all the leaves as this will make it easier to fold them, but try not to rip the leaves themselves.

02 Cut the pork shoulder into six pieces and the black cod into cubed pieces. Rub all the pork pieces with sea salt.

03 On a flat surface, stack four to five taro leaves, ensuring that the biggest leaf is on the bottom and the smallest is on the top.

04 In the centre of the taro leaves, add a piece of pork and top with some pieces of black cod. Then fold the leaves and wrap them to form a bundle.

05 Arrange two ti leaves in an 'x' or cross formation. Place the taro bundles in the centre of the ti leaves and wrap them around the bundles. Secure using string, toothpicks or rubber bands.

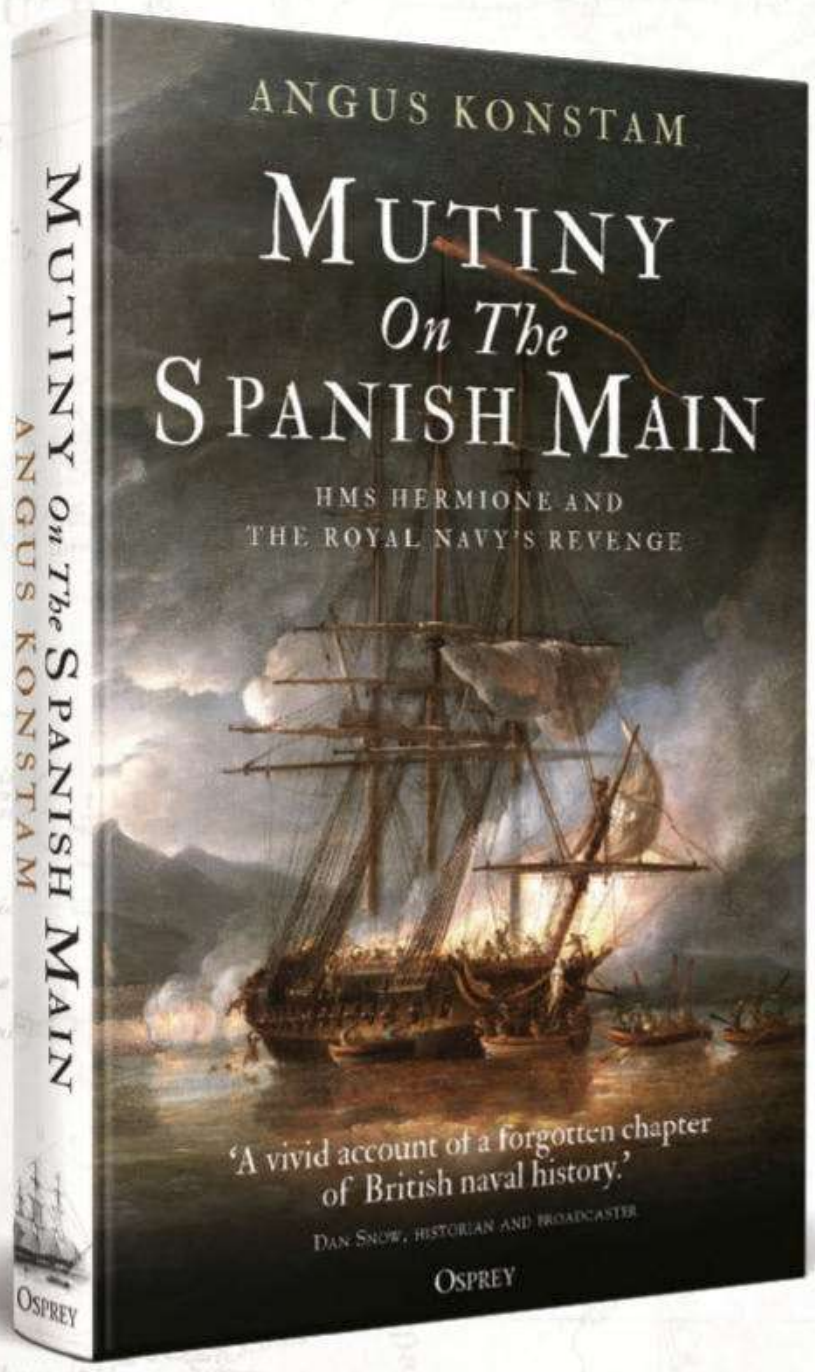
06 Place the bundles in a steamer and steam for four to six hours until they are tender. It is your choice whether you want to remove the ti leaves or not before serving, just make sure you don't eat them because they are not edible!

07 Serve alongside rice, macaroni salad or potatoes.

NEXT MONTH ALL ABOUT HISTORY ISSUE 100! ON SALE 28 JAN

'*A vivid account of a forgotten chapter of British naval history.*'

DAN SNOW,
HISTORIAN, TV PRESENTER AND BROADCASTER



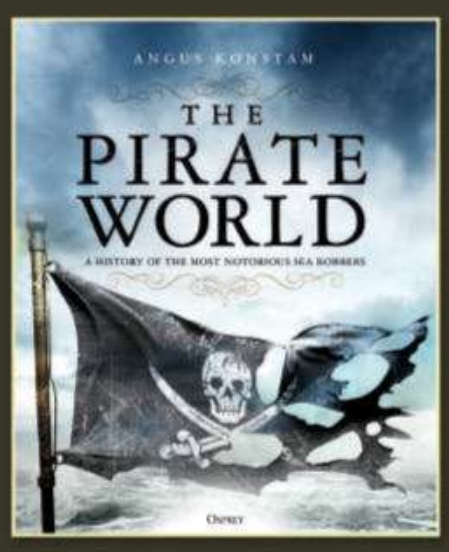
ANGUS KONSTAM

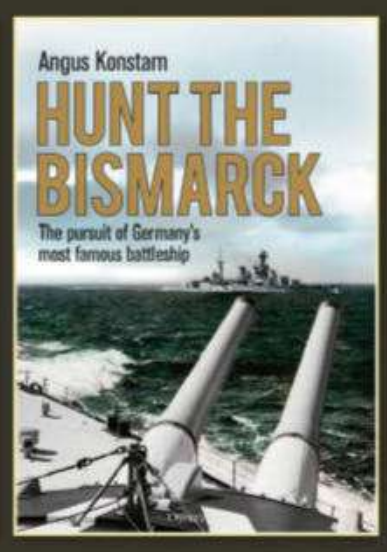
MUTINY
On The SPANISH MAIN

HMS HERMIONE AND
THE ROYAL NAVY'S REVENGE

From renowned author and naval historian Angus Konstam, this fascinating title tells the dramatic story of HMS *Hermione*, a British frigate which was the site of the bloodiest mutiny in British naval history.

ALSO BY ANGUS KONSTAM





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